

# THE STRAITS TIMES

Life

Lan Shui plays last concert with SSO D7



Sport

Djokovic outclasses Nadal in Australian Open C10





World

Vikram Khanna on China's home-made slowdown A9

Home

Speaker Tan Chuan-Jin took this photo B4&5



Top of the News Key takeaways from Davos A8 • Opinion The dangers of 'arrested diplomacy' A16

Hundreds turn out to bid farewell to Aloysius Pang



Hundreds of friends and fans of actor Aloysius Pang lined MacPherson Lane yesterday afternoon for the final send-off of the 28-year-old, who died after suffering injuries while on NSman duty in New Zealand. Corporal First Class (NS) Pang was accorded the full honours of a military funeral.

ST PHOTO: KELVIN CHNG [SEE TOP OF THE NEWS A6&7](#)

At least 20 killed by twin blasts at church in Philippines

**Raul Dancel**  
Philippines Correspondent  
In Manila

At least 20 people were killed and dozens injured yesterday when two bombs exploded at a Roman Catholic cathedral in the mainly Muslim province of Sulu.

It was one of the deadliest attacks in recent years in the Philippines' restive south.

The first bomb went off at around 8am, during a mass inside the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Jolo, a poverty-racked island of some 700,000.

A second blast, purportedly from a bomb stashed inside a motorcycle, followed minutes later at a carpark outside the compound, as those inside the cathedral were fleeing and as government forces were responding to the attack.

Chief Superintendent Graciano Mijares, police director in the region that covers Sulu, said in a report that at least 20 people had died, with over 100 wounded, including 14 soldiers and two men from the Coast Guard.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

But Mr Mujiv Hataman, governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) that covers Sulu, told the online news site Rappler he was "99 per cent certain" the Abu Sayyaf, a gang of self-styled Islamist militants founded in the 1990s with seed money from the Al-Qaeda network, was behind the blasts.

The attack came nearly a week after more than 1.5 million Muslims voted for a new, more powerful, self-administered region, in hopes of ending nearly five decades of a separatist rebellion and a new wave of Islamist extremism sweeping across war-torn Mindanao island.

[rdancel@sph.com.sg](mailto:rdancel@sph.com.sg)

[SEE TOP OF THE NEWS A4](#)

## Record passenger haul for Changi Airport

Total traffic in 2018 likely to have exceeded 65 million, but global uncertainties loom

**Karamjit Kaur**  
Senior Aviation Correspondent

Changi Airport, the world's sixth busiest for international traffic, had another record haul last year, with total passenger traffic believed to have exceeded 65 million, The Straits Times has learnt.

Airport staff had their hands full with the annual number translating to about 180,000 passenger movements a day.

In 2017, Changi Airport handled a total of 62.2 million passengers.

Last year, January to November traffic hit 59.5 million, Changi Airport Group (CAG) reported last month, with the annual numbers expected soon.

The upward trend is expected to continue this year, said experts.

It could be aided by the end-March opening of Changi's newest attraction, Jewel. A joint venture between CAG and Capitaland, the 10-storey mainly commercial development with five basement floors will house more than 280 shops and food and beverage outlets.

It is connected directly to Terminal 1 and will be linked to T2 and T3 via air-conditioned linkways fitted with travelators, and is expected to drive more traffic to the airport.

It may also lure transit passengers, such as those travelling between Australia and Europe, to stop at Changi instead of other airports.

Singapore Airlines (SIA) and other carriers flying to Singapore are also planning to add more flights and destinations this year.

The SIA group, comprising the parent airline, regional arm SilkAir and budget carrier Scoot, plans to grow overall year-on-year capacity by 7 per cent in the current financial year which ends on March 31.

In October last year, Australia's Qantas, one of the biggest foreign airlines to operate out of Changi Air-

port, reaffirmed its commitment to Singapore as a key hub in Asia.

The airline currently operates more than 50 return services to and from Changi Airport each week.

From Singapore, its low-cost affiliate, Jetstar group, operates almost 300 weekly return flights to more than 25 destinations.

The number of flights to India and China is also expected to increase this year, analysts said.

Still, there will be challenges for the global aviation industry.

Just last week, Airports Council International director-general Angela Gittens warned that the outlook for the industry this year remains uncertain. China's ties with several major Western countries are under stress, the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union is still being negotiated, and geopolitical tensions are high in the Middle East, with the Qatar crisis remaining unresolved, she said.

Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt have imposed a political and economic boycott on Qatar since June 2017, accusing it of supporting terrorism, which Doha denies.

All of these could have a significant impact on passenger and traffic growth in 2019, Ms Gittens said.

There is also uncertainty in the United States, she added.

While the US government has just reopened after the longest shutdown in its history, it is not clear whether it will shut down again.


Despite the global concerns, Singapore continues to invest in the air

travel sector with an upgrading planned for T2 later this year and the long-term development of T5 progressing.

The mega passenger terminal, which is expected to open around 2030, is slated to eventually handle up to 70 million passengers a year – more than T1, T2 and T3 combined.

[karam@sph.com.sg](mailto:karam@sph.com.sg)

62 PAGES IN FIVE PARTS  
\$1.10  
To subscribe: 6388-3838  
[sphsubscription.com.sg](mailto:sphsubscription.com.sg)



**sph**  
A Singapore Press Holdings publication  
MCI(P) 069/01/2019★★

**INFO-TECH**

Starts from **\$2**

\*Further 70% PSG Grant



**Employee Attendance App**

- Face Recognition
- GPS Location Captured
- Links to Payroll

SG:D | SMEs GO DIGITAL  
PRE-APPROVED

**YOUR HR MATTERS ON THE GO**

Supported by  
**INFOCOMM MEDIA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**



# 10 must-reads for today

**1 Aiming for a 'Naomi Slam'**  
Newly minted Australian Open champion Naomi Osaka said yesterday she was not satisfied with back-to-back majors and hoped to complete a "Naomi Slam" by winning Wimbledon and the French Open this year. The 21-year-old Japanese will today become the first Asian singles player, male or female, to claim the world No. 1 ranking. **SPORT C9**



Naomi Osaka posing with her Australian Open trophy during a photo shoot at Melbourne's Brighton Beach. PHOTO: REUTERS

**2 Record haul for Changi**  
Passenger traffic at Changi Airport hit a new high of more than 65 million last year, The Straits Times has learnt. The airport, the world's sixth busiest for international traffic, handled 62.2 million passengers in 2017. **TOP OF THE NEWS A1**

**3 BN bullish after by-election**  
Leaders of Malaysia's Umno-led Barisan Nasional coalition have attributed the victory it secured in the Cameron Highlands by-election to the rise of a Malay-Muslim wave, heralding the win as the first step towards reclaiming Putrajaya, after being ousted from power last year. **WORLD A11**

**4 Sikkim's basic income plan**  
The tiny Indian Himalayan state of Sikkim has proposed introducing a universal basic income for all its residents – the first such move by any Indian state. The proposed scheme is likely to cover all of Sikkim's estimated 610,577 residents. **WORLD A12**

**5 Debate over fish deaths**  
Australia has experienced a bizarre environmental disaster in recent weeks as more than a million fish have died in an inland river, prompting debate about whether too much water is being extracted by farmers. **WORLD A13**

**6 Athenian-style democracy**  
President Emmanuel Macron is trying it out in France, but while Athenian-style democracy will enhance grassroots engagement, the practice of going direct to citizens is a double-edged sword, says global affairs correspondent Jonathan Eyal (below). **OPINION A15**



**7 Terror drill at MRT station**  
A simulated terrorist attack involving two gunmen and a suicide bomber was held at Tampines West MRT station yesterday, in a drill that lasted 45 minutes. The exercise was held to enhance security preparedness. **HOME B3**

**8 Better pay at pre-schools**  
The starting pay of pre-school teachers has gone up in recent years, said operators here. For instance, at NTUC First Campus, the second largest pre-school operator here, the average pay for teachers who are diploma graduates has grown by more than 60 per cent over the last decade. **HOME B8**

**9 Banking on EU-S'pore FTA**  
A wider range of halal food products made in Singapore could find their way to stores in Europe for its growing Muslim population, should the upcoming European Union-Singapore Free Trade Agreement be approved. Ratification of the trade pact is on the cards and businesses are looking ahead for new opportunities. **BUSINESS C1**

**10 Singer in reality show finals**  
Home-grown electronic music singer-songwriter Jasmine Sokko (below) is the only Singaporean and one of six acts to make it to the finals of Chinese reality competition programme Rave Now. Known for obscuring most of her face with a visor during appearances, the 23-year-old has gained a solid following of Chinese fans. **LIFE D6**



ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG

## Straits Times Digital

### REACH US AT

Website: [www.straitstimes.com](http://www.straitstimes.com)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/thestraitstimes](https://www.facebook.com/thestraitstimes)  
Twitter: @STcom  
Instagram: @Straits\_Times  
Also follow us on Telegram



### VIDEO

#### Helping others like him

Mr Job Li Ji Hua was once physically violent towards his wife, which cost him his marriage. Today, he is an active volunteer at family violence specialist centre Pave. <http://str.sg/oLX9>



### VIDEO

#### China's hidden joys

The Straits Times travel writer Lee Siew Hua goes on an adventure in the mountains of Yunnan, from sipping freshly made salty butter tea with a Tibetan family to enjoying a bonfire under the stars. <http://str.sg/oLXd>



CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®

# KURIOS

CABINET OF CURIOSITIES

PRESENTED BY



NOW ON SALE

**OPENS 5 JULY**

UNDER THE BIG TOP, BAYFRONT AVENUE,  
BESIDE MARINA BAY SANDS

BOOK NOW AT [SISTIC](http://SISTIC.COM) & [CIRQUEDUSOLEIL.COM/KURIOS](http://CIRQUEDUSOLEIL.COM/KURIOS)

OFFICIAL SPONSOR



MEDIA PARTNERS





## THE YACHT-MASTER II

The ultimate skippers' watch, steeped in yachting competition and performance, featuring an innovative regatta chronograph with a unique programmable countdown. It doesn't just tell time. It tells history.



OYSTER PERPETUAL YACHT-MASTER II

  
**THE HOUR GLASS**

ION ORCHARD. TEL: 6509 9282  
TAKASHIMAYA S.C. TEL: 6734 2420  
270 ORCHARD ROAD. TEL: 6884 8484  
TANG PLAZA. TEL: 6235 7198  
ONE RAFFLES PLACE. TEL: 6534 5855  
MILLENNIA WALK. TEL: 6339 4870  
ORCHARD CENTRAL. TEL: 6337 8309  
VIVOCITY. TEL: 6250 9830  
PARKWAY PARADE. TEL: 6348 9869

WATCH FEATURED. SUBJECT TO STOCK AVAILABILITY





The initial explosion mowed down a large section of wooden pews inside the main hall of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Jolo, a poverty-racked island of some 700,000, in the mainly Muslim province of Sulu, in the Philippines' restive south. PHOTOS: EPA-EFE

KILLERS WILL BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE

The enemies of the state have boldly challenged the capability of the government to secure the safety of the citizenry in that region. The (military) will rise to the challenge and crush these godless criminals... We will pursue to the ends of the earth the ruthless perpetrators behind this dastardly crime until every killer is brought to justice and put behind bars. The law will give them no mercy.



MR SALVADOR PANELO, President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesman, in a text message.

# Militants blamed for deadly Philippine blasts

Abu Sayyaf militants fingered; police cannot yet confirm whether attack is linked to vote on new Muslim-led region

Raul Dancel  
Philippines Correspondent  
In Manila

It happened midway into a mass. At around 8.30am yesterday, a bomb ripped through a Roman Catholic cathedral in Jolo, a poverty-racked island of some 700,000, in the mainly Muslim province of Sulu, in the Philippines' restive south. Hundreds stampeded out through the main door. But the carnage was not over yet. Minutes later, as first responders, mostly army troops and police, arrived on the scene, a second blast tore across a parking lot just outside the church compound. By late afternoon, Chief Superintendent Graciano Mijares, police chief in the region that covers Sulu, had tallied at least 20 dead, and over 100 wounded, including 14 soldiers and two men from the Coast Guard. The initial explosion mowed down a large section of wooden pews inside the cathedral's main hall. The second bomb, said to have been rigged onto a motorcycle, exploded in a more crowded area, hurling human remains and debris across a town square fronting the church, named the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Images on social media and photos filed by wire agencies showed a grisly scene of bodies covered with



STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

blankets lying on a busy street. President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesman Salvador Panelo said in a text message: "The (military) will rise to the challenge and crush these godless criminals... We will pursue to the ends of the earth the ruthless perpetrators behind this dastardly crime until every killer is brought to justice and put behind bars." No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. "We don't have any lead yet. We're looking at different threat groups in the area. We can't say yet if this has anything to do with the recent plebiscite," said director-gen-

eral Oscar Albayalde, the police chief. But Mr Mujiv Hataman, governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) that covers Sulu, told the online news site Rappler he was "99 per cent certain" the Abu Sayyaf, a gang of self-styled Islamist militants founded in the 1990s, was behind the attack. Abu Sayyaf has attacked the cathedral at least twice before, with grenades, in 2010 and 2013. A report in the Inquirer, citing a university professor in Jolo who has dealt with militants as a peace advocate, said the military uncovered a plot by the Abu Sayyaf to bomb Jolo as early as five months ago. It prompted security forces to close the street in front of the cathedral, said Professor Octavio Dinampo. After 20 days, though, the street was reopened. The Abu Sayyaf has long used Sulu as a base, carrying out kidnappings and bombings. It has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Though the group officially has a separatist Islamist agenda, it has capitalised on decades of instability in Mindanao to generate tens of millions of dollars from piracy and ransom payments. It is still holding at least five hostages – a Dutch national, two Malaysians, an Indonesian and a Filipino – in their jungle bases mostly near Sulu's Patikul town, not far from Jolo. The latest attack came nearly a week after more than 1.5 million Muslims, a minority in the predominantly Catholic nation, overwhelmingly approved a more pow-



Above: Victims receiving medical attention at a hospital. At least 20 people were killed, and over 100 wounded, including 14 soldiers and two men from the Coast Guard.

Left: Bodies lay covered on the ground in front of the church. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

erful autonomous region in the Philippines' south. They had voted for the new, self-administered region called the "Bangsamoro", or nation of Moros, in the war-torn island of Mindanao, in hopes of ending nearly five decades of a separatist rebellion that has left over 150,000 people dead. Voters in Sulu, however, rejected

it. Still, the province will be included in the new Bangsamoro region, as it is part of the ARMM, which as a bloc voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Bangsamoro law. That has raised fears of reprisals by militant groups. Those fears seem to have come true.

rdancel@sph.com.sg

News analysis

## Historic vote for Muslims, but no guarantee of peace in Mindanao

Dana Batnag

For The Straits Times  
In Manila

On Jan 21, more than 1.5 million Filipino Muslims overwhelmingly voted for the creation of a new, self-administered region known as the Bangsamoro, or "nation of Moros", in the Philippines' troubled south. The plebiscite to ratify the Bangsamoro law, which creates the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) by 2022, was held in the provinces of the old Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and in the cities of Cotabato in Maguindanao province and Isabela in Sulu province.

On Feb 6, another plebiscite will be held in areas that have asked to be part of the new region. The Bangsamoro law is the product of years of often tumultuous negotiations between the government in Manila and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). It expands the ARMM, earmarks more funds for the new region and grants more powers to officials who will run the region. The MILF, in return, has agreed to give up its quest for secession. With the BARMM, a Parliament will be elected, which will in turn pick a chief minister. In the other 16 regions in the Philippines and in the ARMM, voters elect the regional governor and vice-governor. President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesman Salvador Panelo said the result of the referendum ushers in "a ray of hope to that war-weary,

poverty-stricken, long-neglected and much-heralded promised land". The Bangsamoro law will not automatically bring peace to Mindanao or solve problems of governance overnight, Ms Amina Rasul, president of the Philippine Centre for Islam and Democracy, and a former senator, told CNN Philippines. But "it will provide more powers than the autonomous region currently has... With more tools – with more powers – you will now be able to govern a little better because you will have better leverage", she said. Professor Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, who used to head the government panel that negotiated with the MILF, said the law will transform the revolutionary armed group into a government partner, as MILF leaders will be appointed into a

transition government. Prof Coronel-Ferrer told the Southeast Asia Globe magazine that while there are other armed groups in Mindanao, "the transformation of the biggest and most organised armed group into a governance partner takes away a large constituency from the war arena". "Moreover, the MILF will now have to decommission 30 per cent of its combatants and weapons in compliance... Another 35 per cent will be decommissioned upon the establishment of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority," she said. The MILF is believed to have at least 30,000 fighters. Ms Amirah Lidasan, secretary-general of the Moro Christian People's Alliance, warned that if the MILF abandons the Bangsamoro's cause for self-determination, peace will stay elusive. She said the MILF must

prove to Filipino Muslims that it represents their interests, not that of the government, and it must be careful not to repeat the injustices of the past. "If the MILF will be true to its revolutionary past, to bring about change, justice for the Bangsamoro, protect the Bangsamoro, we hope there will be peace," she said. However, people will turn against the MILF if the group is seen as nothing more than an implementer of some government policies which are unjust and prejudicial to the people of Moro, she added. Ms Lidasan also recalled what happened to the Moro National Liberation Front's (MNLF) peace negotiations with the Ramos administration, which ran the country from 1992 to 1998. As part of the peace negotiations, the Philippine government supported then MNLF chief Nur

Misuari's bid to become ARMM governor in 1996, which Misuari won handily. But he was removed as MNLF chair in 2000 and not expected to be re-elected as ARMM governor. In November 2001, Misuari launched a rebellion on the eve of the ARMM elections after he accused the government of renegeing on the peace agreement. In 2011, then President Benigno Aquino said ARMM was "a failed experiment". The following year, the government signed with the MILF a framework agreement that eventually led to the Bangsamoro law. Ms Rasul said the ratification of the Bangsamoro law "is not a quick fix for the region's systemic problems". "Weak and poor governance in the autonomous region cannot be resolved merely by a change in law. It is up to the region's leaders to effectively utilise the additional powers under the Bangsamoro law, and ensure better governance," she said. dana.batnag@gmail.com





## Usher in the Lunar New Year with Standard Chartered Credit Cards.

### Disney Gift 2019 Promotion<sup>1</sup>

From 28 January to 28 February 2019, spend a minimum of S\$188 on eligible same-day retail transaction(s) to redeem a limited edition SC-Disney Stainless Steel Bottle.

	<b>28 January – 13 February 2019</b> <b>SC-Disney Stainless Steel Bottle (Grey)</b>  Limited to the 1 <sup>st</sup> 1,500 redemptions.		<b>14 February – 28 February 2019</b> <b>SC-Disney Stainless Steel Bottle (White)</b>  Limited to the 1 <sup>st</sup> 1,500 redemptions.
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Redemption of gift must be made on the same day as the eligible same-day retail transaction(s). Each eligible cardholder is limited to one gift per day. For redemption details, visit [sc.com/sg/cny](http://sc.com/sg/cny). Images of the gift(s) are for illustrative purposes only.

### Spin to Prosperity 2019 Promotion<sup>2</sup>

From 22 January to 28 February 2019, stand to win cashback of up to S\$68 or a 3D2N Hong Kong Disneyland package for 2 when you spend a minimum of S\$188 in a single eligible retail transaction on your registered credit card. Limited to the first 100,000 qualifying transactions. Each eligible cardholder is limited to 5 winning transactions a day.

To register for the Spin to Prosperity promotion, SMS CNY19 to 77222 or +65 8318 4584 (if overseas) from your registered mobile number with the bank. Visit [sc.com/sg/cny](http://sc.com/sg/cny) to find out more.

Don't have our card? Apply online today at [sc.com/sg/cards](http://sc.com/sg/cards)



[sc.com/sg](http://sc.com/sg)

Here for good

<sup>1</sup> The Disney Gift 2019 Promotion ("Promotion") is available from 28 January to 28 February 2019 (both dates inclusive) (the "Promotion Period"). The Promotion is open to all eligible principal cardholders of Standard Chartered Credit Cards ("Cards") issued by Standard Chartered Bank (Singapore) Limited ("Bank") (collectively, "Eligible Cardholders"). To qualify for the Promotion, Eligible Cardholders must, during the Promotion Period, charge in Singapore dollars, a minimum total of S\$188 of same-day retail transaction(s) (each an "Eligible Transaction" and collectively "Eligible Transactions") to their Cards. If the Eligible Cardholder satisfies the conditions above, he/she will be eligible to redeem one Standard Chartered ("SC")-Disney Stainless Steel Bottle ("Gift"). Redemption of the Gifts must be made on the same day of purchase and is available on a first come, first served basis, while stocks last. An Eligible Cardholder is limited to one (1) gift per day, limited to the first 3,000 redemptions during the Promotion Period. Original hardcopy charge slips presented for redemption of the Gifts must be on Eligible Transactions made and dated on the same day. Any number of original hardcopy charge slips can be combined to make the redemption. Eligible Cardholders are required to present their Credit Card(s) used for satisfying the Eligible Transactions as set out above and original hardcopy charge slips at: TANGS at Tang Plaza, Customer Service Counter, Level 4, 310 Orchard Road, Singapore 238864, 11:00am to 8:30pm (Monday – Sunday, excluding Public Holidays) to redeem the Gifts. <sup>2</sup> The Spin to Prosperity 2019 Promotion ("Promotion") is available from 22 January to 28 February 2019 (both dates inclusive) (the "Promotion Period"). The Promotion is open to all eligible principal cardholders of Standard Chartered Credit Cards ("Cards") issued by Standard Chartered Bank (Singapore) Limited ("Bank") (collectively, "Eligible Cardholders"). To participate in the Promotion, Eligible Cardholders must successfully register during the Registration Period, from 19 January to 26 February 2019 (both dates inclusive) ("Registration Period"), 2 calendar days from the time of registration is required for successful registration for the Promotion. To register for the Promotion, Eligible Cardholders must send an SMS composed in the following format: "CNY19" (Example: CNY19) to 77222 or +65 8318 4584 (if the Eligible Cardholder is sending the SMS when he/she is not in Singapore) from his/her mobile number that was registered with the Bank ("Bank Registered Mobile Number"). An acknowledgement of successful Registration will be sent to Cardholder's Bank Registered Mobile Number. Upon successful Registration, all of the Eligible Cardholder's validly existing Cards will be registered for the Promotion (such successfully registered card(s) referred to as a "Registered Card"), and the cardholder of such Registered Card, a "Registered Cardholder". All SMSes which are not in this prescribed format, sent to an incorrect number, or sent from a non-Bank Registered Mobile Number will not be accepted and will be considered by the Bank to be invalid and/or void, and the Bank's determination shall be final and conclusive. Eligible Cardholders need only register once to participate in the Promotion except that Registered Cardholders who have changed or updated their Bank Registered Mobile Number will have to re-register for the Promotion under the new number. Failure to re-register will mean that cardholder will not be eligible for the Promotion. To qualify, Eligible Cardholders must charge S\$188 or more on a single eligible transaction with a transaction date falling within the Promotion Period and successfully posted to the Registered Card account during the Promotion Period ("Spin to Prosperity Qualifying Transaction"). The first 100,000 Spin to Prosperity Qualifying Transactions (each a "Winning Transaction") will receive an SMS containing a unique URL ("Spin to Prosperity SMS"). Eligible Cardholders are eligible for one unique URL sent via one SMS with every Winning Transaction made, capped at a maximum of 5 Winning Transactions per day. Eligible Cardholders who have qualified to receive the Prizes will be notified either by mail or SMS by no later than 30 April 2019. All cashback Prizes will be credited to the relevant Winning Cardholders' Registered Card Account by 30 April 2019. SMSes will be sent to the relevant Winning Cardholder's Bank Registered Mobile Number to inform them that the cashback Prize amount has been credited to their Registered Card Account. Visit <http://www.sc.com/sg/cny> for full terms and conditions that apply.

Standard Chartered Bank (Singapore) Limited 1 Reg. No. 201224747C



## Funeral of Aloysius Pang



Pall bearers from the Singapore Armed Forces carrying the casket of Corporal First Class (NS) Aloysius Pang into Mandai Crematorium yesterday. The 28-year-old actor was accorded a military funeral service. ST PHOTO: TIMOTHY DAVID

# Tearful send-off for late actor Aloysius Pang

**Hundreds turn up to say final goodbye to 28-year-old, including celebrities and fans**

**Tan Tam Mei**

Corporal First Class (NS) Aloysius Pang, an actor who died after suffering injuries during NSman training last week received an emotional final send-off yesterday – with the hundreds who turned up reflecting the way the 28-year-old's story had captured the hearts and minds of a nation.

Though a large crowd had gathered at Mandai Crematorium yesterday afternoon, as the white hearse carrying the body of Mr Pang turned into the driveway, there was pin-drop silence.

The quiet was broken only when the procession began and the military band marched and played a tune in front of the hearse.

Behind the vehicle, Mr Pang's elder brother Kenny, looking solemn and wiping tears from his face, followed closely on foot. The rest of family, along with close friends – most of them grim-faced and teary-eyed – were waiting in the hall for the private funeral service.

About 300 Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) servicemen from the Artillery Formation flanked the stretch leading to the service hall and saluted their late comrade.

CFC Pang was accorded a military funeral service yesterday.

Outside the service hall, eight pall bearers stood in formation. They carried the casket, draped with the state flag, into the hall past the crowd of onlookers and media.

When the service was over, the deafening sound of gunshots was heard as six servicemen fired three rounds of blanks. They then bowed their heads and observed a minute of silence.

Although members of the public had been asked not to attend the funeral service at Mandai, some like teacher Ken Tan, 48, felt compelled to turn up.

"He died in training, he has been a good son for Singapore," said Mr Tan, who had waited outside the hall.

"I don't know him personally, but I feel the loss of a Singaporean who



Actress Jayley Woo, Mr Pang's girlfriend, placing her hand on veteran actor Chen Shucheng's shoulder as they walk behind the hearse with other friends and relatives. ST PHOTO: JASMINE CHOONG



A young fan collapsed during the memorial service in MacPherson Lane. During the service, more than 10 eulogies were delivered by relatives, colleagues and friends.

ST PHOTO: KELVIN CHNG

had worked hard for his future."

After the cremation, Mr Pang's parents left the premises. His mother then emerged, held up by family members as she was sobbing so hard she could barely stand.

Trailing behind them was Mr Pang's girlfriend, actress Jayley Woo, along with a host of his show-business colleagues, including television host Quan Yi Fong, actor Shane Pow and actress-radio deejay Kimberly Wang. Many were seen trying to compose themselves even after the final farewell.

**When the service was over, the deafening sound of gunshots was heard as six servicemen fired three rounds of blanks. They then bowed their heads and observed a minute of silence.**

A three-day wake, which began on Friday, and a public memorial service yesterday were held at 82A MacPherson Lane. A part of the wake on the second and third day was open to the public.

Those who had turned up included Minister for National Development Lawrence Wong, MacPherson MP Tin Pei Ling, and Marsiling-Yew Tee GRC MP Alex Yam, as well as many of Mr Pang's fans and fellow celebrities. Representatives from the Singapore Armed Forces were also present, including

Colonel Terry Tan, commander of the Combat Service Support Command.

Shortly after the memorial service at MacPherson began, a young fan collapsed from the heat and was taken to the side to rest.

During the service, colleagues, friends and relatives delivered more than 10 eulogies.

Actor Xu Bin, a good friend of Mr Pang, said: "You were always there for me, no questions asked." Even as he teared up, he also shared examples of Mr Pang's selfless ways, such as how he would take the time to donate blood and even thought of donating his bone marrow.

Speaking before the memorial service, musician Narelle Kheng from home-grown English pop band The Sam Willows, said it was hard to believe that Mr Pang was gone.

"He was a passionate actor. An angel. If anything, he wasn't one that deserved (to die in such a way)."

Many attendees were unable to hold back their emotions as they approached the coffin, with some bearing flowers and gifts for the late actor.

Driver Vincent Kan and his girlfriend were among the first few who had turned up for the wake yesterday morning.

The 25-year-old had been a fan of Mr Pang since a few years ago when he was cast as an extra in a drama that the late actor had starred in.

"I remember his acting skills and how he persevered despite the heat and the need for multiple retakes," he said.

Madam Leanne Teo, who is in her 60s, had watched the actor "grow up on television".

"I thought I should come and pay my respects," said Madam Teo, who works in logistics.

Mr Pang was carrying out repair works inside a Singapore Self-Propelled Howitzer on Jan 19 and suffered serious injuries to his chest and abdomen when the gun barrel was lowered, the Ministry of Defence (Mindef) said earlier.

He was evacuated to Waikato Hospital, a regional trauma centre south of Auckland, where his condition deteriorated, despite undergoing three operations. His body was flown to Paya Lebar Air Base on a Republic of Singapore Air Force KC-135R tanker aircraft on Friday.

His death was the fifth reported since September 2017, following four years of zero training- and operations-related fatalities. Mindef had said that an independent Committee of Inquiry will look into the circumstances leading to Mr Pang's death.

Polytechnic student Gloria Lim, 21, who was a fan of Mr Pang, said: "I hope he reincarnates and can do what he set out to do in his next life. It's sad that his life was cut short."

tammei@sph.com.sg



Funeral of Aloysius Pang

‘Kind, hard-working and filial son’

Tributes flow at memorial service for actor, from celebrities, colleagues and relatives

Lim Min Zhang

As actor Aloysius Pang lay in his hospital bed in New Zealand, suffering from injuries that would ultimately prove fatal, his thoughts were still primarily about the welfare of his mother.

His mother, the only one from the family to see him when he was still conscious in hospital, cried seeing her son in that state and Mr Pang tried his best to cheer her up.

Speaking on behalf of the family at the memorial service yesterday, Mr Pang’s eldest brother Jefferson told those gathered of one of the last conversations the family had with the 28-year-old.

“When my mum was crying by his bed, the first reply he gave was ‘Mum, don’t cry. If you cry, I’ll cry too, and I’m in a lot of pain. I’ll be better in a couple of days, and I’ll take you to New Zealand casino to walk walk,’” he said.

“So when I saw some of the pictures of what happened to him, I could imagine that he was undergoing a lot of pain. And the first priority was still mum,” he added, choking up.

Describing the period in the hospital as a very difficult time for the family, he said that Mr Pang’s “kryptonite” was his mother’s tears.

“Every time my mum cries, he’ll definitely cry with her,” he said, adding that Mr Pang loved his mother “with all his heart”.

Mr Pang died in New Zealand last Wednesday, four days after he suffered serious injuries to his chest and abdomen while doing repair work during an annual live-firing exercise there. The armament technician from the 268th Battalion, Singapore Artillery was on NSman duty.

Tributes flowed during the one hour and 45 minute memorial service in MacPherson Lane yesterday afternoon, with a string of eulogies from friends, relatives and colleagues – including veteran actors and production crew members.

In the speeches, Mr Pang was repeatedly described as kind, hard-working and filial.

Mr Jefferson Pang, who was the first speaker, said their mother doted on Aloysius a lot because he was the youngest. She would coach him on his scripts when he was younger, be there on set, and “witnessed a fine young man growing to where he is today”.

The founder of film distributor Encore Films, Ms Joyce Lee, who produced and directed the 2016 film Young & Fabulous featuring Mr Pang in the lead role, had a meal with him a day before he left for his NSman duty.

The most important people to him were his parents, she said. “(Mr Pang) even told me when he finds a girlfriend or wife, the most important criterion is that she has to be filial to his parents. Otherwise, he would not accept her,” she said in Mandarin.

Ms Lee said he had looked forward to going to New Zealand because “he said he had some things to think over”, being 28 and having felt he had the responsibility to take care of his family.

He had also told her that he wanted to be a director and get married by 31.

“He said ‘I want to get married by then – but I haven’t made enough money yet. I hope to be able to make enough money, because if I marry her, I want to be able to take

care of her for life.”

Mr Pang’s girlfriend Jayley Woo, who went public with their relationship after his death, attended the memorial service but did not speak. She had earlier written an emotional farewell to him that she posted online.

Actress Kym Ng said: “Why do I love Aloysius? He is very sensible,

always very thoughtful, dedicated to his friends and his work. I will miss you, Aloysius, your smile, your big eyes and the gentleness in your voice when you talk. Farewell.”

Actress Felicia Chin said Mr Pang would set aside 10 per cent of his pay every month to thank and bless the production crew, adding that he was also a humble person who would not boast about his achievements.

She said he would buy portable fans for his fellow actors on set.

“He always loved, gave and spoke from his heart.”

mzlim@sph.com.sg



Actor Aloysius Pang’s mother with other family members at his wake yesterday in MacPherson Lane. Mr Jefferson Pang, the actor’s eldest brother, said in his eulogy that their mother doted on Aloysius a lot because he was the youngest. ST PHOTO: KELVIN CHNG

CONCERN FOR MUM CAME FIRST

When my mum was crying by his bed, the first reply he gave was ‘Mum, don’t cry. If you cry, I’ll cry too, and I’m in a lot of pain. I’ll be better in a couple of days, and I’ll take you to New Zealand casino to ‘walk walk’.



MR JEFFERSON PANG, actor Aloysius Pang’s eldest brother, speaking at the memorial service in MacPherson Lane.

STARHUB MOBILE CLOCKED SINGAPORE’S FASTEST 4G SPEEDS ONCE AGAIN

OPENSIGNAL SPEED AWARDS 2018

UNLIMITED WEEKEND DATA

FOR UNSTOPPABLE PRODUCTIVITY

HELLO CHANGE

SAMSUNG EXCLUSIVE

MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION DISCOUNT

10% OFF  
15% OFF  
20% OFF

1 MOBILE LINE  
2 MOBILE LINES  
3 MOBILE LINES

+

\$200 OFF SAMSUNG DEVICES\*

NO HIDDEN FEES  
UNLIMITED WEEKEND DATA

STARBUY  
NEW COLOUR

Samsung Galaxy Note9 (128GB)

\$9

[U.P. \$209]

2-year L plan  
8GB + FREE 15GB  
+ Unlimited Weekend Data

Samsung Galaxy S9+ (128GB)

\$109

[U.P. \$309]

2-year M plan  
5GB + FREE 10GB  
+ Unlimited Weekend Data

Samsung Galaxy A9

\$0

[U.P. \$139]

2-year S plan  
4GB  
+ Unlimited Weekend Data

PROSPERITY DRAW

Win a dream stay at Ocean Suites at Resorts World™ Sentosa!

starhub.com/smedraw

SAMSUNG

shops

1800 888 8888

starhub.com/bizmobilepromo

business@starhub.com

DRIVING TOMORROW'S BUSINESS INNOVATIONS

StarHub

This Promotion is valid until 28 February 2019, unless otherwise notified by StarHub. To be eligible for this Promotion, applicants must be small, medium-sized companies, businesses, or partnerships (SMs) registered with Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority of Singapore. Applicants are required to present their latest business profile and other relevant documents as may be required by StarHub. Applications are subject to StarHub's approval and credit checks and StarHub reserves the right to decline any application. \*Samsung Exclusive Promotion: Customers who sign up or reconfirm on Business Mobile lines on XS/GAL plans with selected Samsung devices will enjoy the respective multi-line discount off the prevailing monthly subscription. \$200 handset discount, free Caller Number Display, and International Roaming Subscription. The selected Samsung devices are Samsung Galaxy Note9, Samsung Galaxy S9/S9+, and Samsung Galaxy A9. These Promotions are not valid with handset vouchers and/or any other promotions and/or discounts. For detailed promotion Terms and Conditions, please refer to www.starhub.com/businesspromos. SME Prosperity Draw: Customers who sign up or reconfirm on Business Mobile/MaxMobile/Business Fibre Broadband/Business Wireless Broadband 10G/SmartU2G Business Solutions will stand a chance at the Lucky Draw. For more details on the Lucky Draw, as well as Terms and Conditions, please visit www.starhub.com/smedraw or such other link as may be provided by StarHub from time to time. StarHub reserves the right to amend, suspend, withdraw, or terminate, whether in whole or part, this Promotion and/or any of these terms and conditions without prior notice at StarHub's absolute discretion. OpenSignal Awards - Mobile Networks Update: Singapore report (November 2018), based on independent analysis of 179,604,972 on-device measurements recorded by 14,155 users during the period August 1 - October 29 © 2018 OpenSignal Inc.



# 3 takeaways from Davos 2019

Concern over China's rising influence, curbing negative effects of AI, and resolve of world's elite to help others among noteworthy issues



**Sumiko Tan**  
Executive Editor  
In Davos

"Remember to wear your shoe grips," the woman in the shuttle bus told me. "Last year, my colleague broke her arm on the first day."

For newcomers to the Alpine town of Davos – especially those from the tropics – the weather is probably the main thing that occupies your mind when you arrive.

While snow makes the landscape pretty, it can also turn to ice, leading to treacherous conditions. Grips attached to the soles are essential.

Luckily, the roads in Davos weren't too icy last week when the annual World Economic Forum (WEF) conference took place. Visions of broken limbs soon went away and the mind could focus on the topics at hand. And there was a

bewildering menu of subjects a person could wade into from 7am on Tuesday to noon on Friday.

The theme of this year's meeting was Globalisation 4.0: Shaping a Global Architecture in the Age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Politics, business and technology were key subjects, but you could also listen to experts speak on religion and mindfulness.

For the uninitiated, the WEF is a Swiss-based not-for-profit organisation founded in 1971 by Dr Klaus Schwab, a German economist.

Every January, the by-invitation meeting attracts about 3,000 big names in government, business, civil society, academia and the media to Davos, a town 1,560m up the Swiss Alps.

The discussions are done panel-style – experts sit in a row and are asked questions by a moderator and, if there's time, the audience.

The real networking and deal-making take place away from the main programme, at privately arranged meetings and late-night parties.

Unlike last year, American President Donald Trump was a no-show after pulling out because of the shut-

down crisis. Also staying home to deal with domestic woes were Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May and France's President Emmanuel Macron. China's President Xi Jinping and Russian leader Vladimir Putin were also absent.

"Without Trump, this year is definitely calmer and less hysterical than last year," said a Davos regular.

The flipside, though, was a more muted event with no big showstoppers. Among the most popular sessions were those by the British naturalist, Sir David Attenborough, including him being interviewed by Britain's Prince William.

As expected, topics like the US-China trade spat, the state of global trade, the fragmented state of geopolitics and climate change came up a lot.

For me, three other issues stuck out in Davos 2019:

- China: Big, bad wolf or benign superpower?
- Artificial intelligence: Don't let it get out of hand
- Doing good in a dog-eat-dog world.

sumiko@sph.com.sg



Above: Swedish youth climate activist Greta Thunberg sent a message to the grown-ups that it will be their fault if they do not do more to stop an unfolding environmental catastrophe.

Left: Straits Times executive editor Sumiko Tan (fifth from left) joined 30 others in the "A Day in the Life of a Refugee" project, which sought to simulate the plight of refugees.

PHOTO: DAVID MCINTYRE/ CROSSROADS FOUNDATION

## 1 China: Big, bad wolf or benign superpower?

"Welcome to China," a woman in traditional Chinese costume proclaimed when I stepped into her sight.

She looked unfazed when I walked away. "Welcome to China," she repeated to the next person who walked by.

An exhibition on the Chinese city of Chengdu occupied a prominent space in the lobby of the Sunstar Alpine hotel in Davos last week.

Complete with real bamboo trees, it promoted Chengdu as a modern, progressive green city.

The hotel was a hot spot for the Chinese at the World Economic Forum (WEF). When I was there for an hour last Tuesday, seven in 10 faces sitting in the lobby were from China.

The WEF has a good relationship with China. Since 2007, it has been holding the Annual Meeting of the New Champions in either Tianjin or Dalian. This Summer Davos brings together leaders in emerging technologies.

The Chinese made their presence felt in Davos, dominating not just discourse on trade and policy but also through force of sheer physical presence.

A "Dalian Night" was held at the Davos Congress Centre, the main convention hall, last Wednesday.

Tall, fringed red curtains lined the staircase leading to a wide space where a female instrumental troupe played Chinese music and food stations manned by Shangri-La Hotel Dalian staff served pan-fried dumplings and skewered lamb.

A large screen showed, on con-

tinuous loop, a video extolling "Digital Dalian" and its many tech marvels. Cute, white fluffy dolphin plushies were distributed and WEF founder Klaus Schwab made an appearance.

But while the WEF might be enthusiastic about China, others are not so embracing.

There is increasing wariness about China, said a Davos participant. "As it becomes more powerful, is it a benign power, or not?"

Observers say this comes on the back of its trade war with the United States, as well as suspicions fanned by the US and its allies that Chinese tech firms could be used by the Chinese government for spying.

The International Monetary Fund has also warned that China's efforts to control its economic slowdown – including fiscal stimulus, infrastructure projects and injecting liquidity – may not be enough.

The mood was different in 2017, when Davos delegates received Chinese President Xi Jinping warmly when he made his debut. His speech defending free trade ticked all the right boxes, especially with Mr Donald Trump about to be inaugurated as US president.

While Mr Xi was not there this year, Chinese political and business representatives seemed united in projecting a message of reasonableness and quiet confidence. They talked about wanting to see the trade war end and expressed optimism that China will continue to drive global growth.

Vice-President Wang Qishan,

who was there, said China's economic growth rate – 6.6 per cent last year, the lowest since 1990 – was "not low at all", and growth will continue and be sustainable.

The wariness of China was starkly evident at the annual George Soros event at the Seehof hotel last Thursday.

Under a harsh light on a small stage, the 88-year-old Hungarian-American billionaire and activist read out a harsh critique of the Chinese President.

He described Mr Xi as "the most dangerous enemy" of free societies for presiding over a high-tech surveillance regime.

He said Mr Trump should drop trade disputes with other countries and focus on China, and also crack down on tech firms like Huawei and ZTE which could be used to assert authoritarian control.

And, in a backhanded compliment, he said: "China is not the only authoritarian regime in the world but it is the wealthiest, strongest and technologically most advanced."

The next day, China dismissed Mr Soros' speech. A Foreign Ministry spokesman said the remarks were "meaningless and not worth refuting", and that "we hope the relevant American can correct his attitude, not be shortsighted, and hold an objective, rational and correct opinion of China's development".

The Davos meeting in January is an annual stock-take on world developments. It will be interesting to see what Davos 2020 will have to say about China and its place in the world.

## 2 AI: Don't let it get out of hand

A major theme at this year's summit was how more needs to be done to curb the negative consequences of artificial intelligence (AI).

Among others, German Chancellor Angela Merkel called for new international rules on data use, and Japanese Premier Shinzo Abe said data governance will be the theme at the G-20 meeting in June in Osaka.

AI has been a topic at Davos over the past few years. The conversation has moved from how it is exciting and revolutionary – robots helping in household chores – to worries that it will replace workers.

The tone on AI this year was decidedly dark, with it being linked to global power struggles, privacy issues, unethical use of data and biases in AI algorithms.

Mr Marc Benioff, CEO and founder of enterprise cloud computing giant Salesforce, called AI a "new human right" and warned of a new tech divide between those who have access to AI and those who do not.

"Today, only a few countries and a few companies have the very best AI," he said at a panel.

"Those who have the best AI will be smarter, healthier, richer, and their warfare will be significantly more advanced... Those without AI are going to be weaker and poorer, less educated and sicker."

Interestingly, Singapore has decided to take a lead on this issue. It released in Davos a framework on how AI can be ethically and responsibly used, which it welcomes businesses in Singapore and elsewhere to adopt.

The framework, a living document that will be tweaked with feedback, is the first in Asia to provide detailed and readily implementable guidance.

Singapore is also working with the World Economic Forum's Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution to further drive AI and data innovation. This would include engaging organisations to discuss Singapore's framework and facilitate its adoption.

## 3 Doing good in a dog-eat-dog world

Within minutes, we realised that the best way to survive was to look down. Eye contact was going to get you noticed by the guards, and being noticed was not good on a refugee boat or in a camp.

Last Wednesday, I joined 30 others in the "A Day in the Life of a Refugee" project, which has been part of the World Economic Forum (WEF) programme for several years.

Against a soundscape of screams, crying and gunshots, we were pushed around darkened rooms, shouted at, lectured to, packed into pitch-black tents and, for some unlucky ones, punished by kneeling.

After this 45-minute simulation, the lights came on and the next 30 minutes were spent discussing the plight of refugees.

The project is by Hong Kong-based Crossroads Foundation and it was an affecting and sobering experience for the participants, which included Mrs Akie Abe, wife of the Japanese Prime Minister, in the session I attended.

The WEF declares that it is "committed to improving the state of the world". But it is easy to be cynical about this do-good aim in the forum's elitist setting.

I was in a shuttle bus late one night with four others when an American woman struck up a conversation with a British author-entrepreneur.

"Are you successful?" the American – who joked that she was tipsy – asked.

"Well, I am in Davos," the British woman replied.

For all the Davos talk about a more egalitarian world, the fo-

rum is itself highly hierarchical.

There are about 10 types of forum badges, each pegging you to your place. It is not uncommon to see someone you just met sneak a look at the status of your badge.

The top-tier badge is white and covers delegates – government leaders, CEOs, their spouses and also senior journalists. Then there are orange badges for media covering the event, and other shades of blue, purple and green for staff, volunteers and technicians.

I was at a bar counter at the convention centre one evening when an exhausted-looking man in a windbreaker asked for a glass of wine.

The bartender was about to pour it for him when he saw that the man had a purple badge. These are for technicians whose job includes lugging heavy equipment in freezing temperatures.

"Purple, no wine," the bartender said, but relented and poured him a drink. It was gulped down quickly.

Still, there is no mistaking an air of earnestness in Davos.

Microsoft founder Bill Gates still finds it worth his while attending it to persuade fellow billionaires to help fight diseases in the world's poorest countries.

Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg took a train to tell the grown-ups there that it will be their fault if they do not do more to stop an unfolding environmental catastrophe. "I don't want your hope. I want you to panic... and act."

From the faces of fellow participants at the refugee event, I think the message of helping those who need help sunk in, at least a little.





# CHINA'S SLOW-MOTION CRISIS

Last week, China announced that its economic growth fell to 6.6 per cent, its lowest in 28 years. **The Straits Times** looks at what this means for Asia and the rest of the world.

**Vikram Khanna**  
Associate Editor

The ubiquitous developments that were such conspicuous testament to China's enviable growth over the last couple of decades are now telling another story, of a growing malaise.

Millions of apartments stand empty in eerie ghost cities, while theme parks in the middle of nowhere languish, deserted. Railroads, airports and superhighways are barely used even as a glut of steel, aluminium, glass and cement accumulates.

Last Monday, the government in Beijing announced that China's economic growth last year fell to 6.6 per cent, its lowest level since 1990. How this happened and where it might lead are of huge importance, not only for China, but also for Asia and the rest of the world. But before we get into that story, a cautionary note about the data.

Both inside and outside China, many economists think those official growth numbers are overblown. Mr Michael Pettis, professor of finance at Peking University, thinks China's growth is more likely about 3 per cent. Dr Xiang Songzuo, professor of economics at Renmin University in Beijing, puts it at 1.67 per cent.

Many banks and investment firms look for "proxy variables" such as car sales, tax revenues and factory activity to get a truer picture of China's economy and such variables are all pointing to weakness.

Car sales have been plunging since last July, retail sales growth is the lowest in 15 years and consumption tax revenues have been slumping since October – all of which show that China's consumers are cutting back. Businesses are reeling as well. The Purchasing Managers Index, a gauge of factory activity, fell below 50 last month, indicating a contraction.

Factory workers in some cities have been sent home two months before the Chinese New Year holiday. In recent days, profit warnings have surfaced from companies that do substantial business in China, including the industrial robot manufacturers Kuka and Yaskawa Electric, and semiconductor makers Samsung and TSMC, as well as Apple, whose chief executive Tim Cook confessed to having underestimated the impact of China's slowdown.

Exports to China from South Korea and Japan also dropped sharply last month, in a sign that China's slowdown is starting to affect its trading partners.

## ADDICTION TO DEBT

The slowdown is not the result of the trade war with the US, although this could aggravate the problem. It is largely home-made. At the root of it is an addiction to debt that has become increasingly hard to control.

China's debt binge started during the global financial crisis in 2008, when it launched a four trillion yuan stimulus package. China's banks went on a lending spree, lavishing credit on state-owned enterprises (SOEs), local governments and infrastructure projects. All those empty townships, deserted factories and overproduced capital goods were mostly financed by debt. A shadow banking system – also dominated by commercial banks, but less subject to regulation – also emerged to lend to private companies and sell investment products to savers.

China's credit binge propelled its high growth, but in the process, the debt burden roughly doubled over 10 years to close to 300 per cent of GDP last year, according to the Institute of International Finance.

But the more credit increased,



A construction site (above) in Nantong, Jiangsu province, on Jan 1, and a luxury car showroom in Beijing on Jan 22. The government announced last week that China's economic growth last year fell to 6.6 per cent, its lowest level since 1990. PHOTOS: REUTERS, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

the less it had an impact on growth. According to Morgan Stanley calculations, from 2003 to 2008, one yuan of extra credit generated one yuan of GDP growth. By 2010, after China had launched its stimulus, it took two yuan of extra credit to get one yuan of GDP growth. By 2015, the ratio had become four to one and by 2016 it was six to one – twice the level in the United States during the housing bubble that led to the global financial crisis in 2008.

At the same time, external debt also increased as Chinese companies borrowed in dollars to take advantage of low US interest rates.

China's policymakers are aware of the problem and realise they need to get debt levels down. Over the last three years, they have curtailed lending, tightening rules for borrowing by businesses and local governments and imposing curbs on house purchases.

But this led to the bigger-than-expected slowdown that is occurring now, so in the second half of last year, the government reopened the credit taps, cutting banks' reserve requirements five times – enabling them to lend more freely – and easing restrictions on bond issues by local governments in order that infrastructure spending can resume. In short, China has gone back to its old strategy of debt-fuelled growth, except now it will need even bigger amounts of debt to produce the

same growth. Its economy has turned into a credit junkie that needs ever stronger doses of lending to keep growth going.

## AN UNSUSTAINABLE GAME

How long can this go on? In a state-controlled system in which the government owns the biggest banks and most of the biggest borrowers, since SOEs and local governments are also state-affiliated, debt-fuelled growth can last for longer than in systems that are not state-controlled. But it cannot go on forever. At some point, mortgages will become unserviceable, companies will go bust, savers who bought investment products from shadow banks will be hit with losses and the

**The slowdown is not the result of the trade war with the US, although this could aggravate the problem. It is largely home-made. At the root of it is an addiction to debt that has become increasingly hard to control.**

banks will come under pressure to reveal the true state of their books.

That is when the system will need to be cleaned up, just like in the US after the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008. Except that in China, the clean-up job will be much bigger and harder because the preceding credit boom was the longest in history and the debt, which is still accumulating, will be larger.

A 2018 International Monetary Fund study on China's credit expansion warned "all credit booms that began when the (debt-to-GDP) ratios were above 100 per cent – as in China's case – ended badly".

Harvard economics professor Ken Rogoff fears that China's debt build-up could lead to "the third leg of the global debt supercycle, after subprime in the US and the eurozone debt crisis. Nobody knows how this is going to play out, but it could be on the scale of 2008 and will be very bad for Asia, and there will be spillovers in Europe", he said.

A study by Moody's Analytics last year warned that South-east Asia will be hit by China's economic slowdown through multiple channels. One is trade, both direct and indirect. For example, not only would Singapore's exports to China decline, but as the China-bound exports of Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia would be hit as well, Singapore's exports to all these countries would also decline.

The second is through the financial channel: If China's currency and stock markets decline, so will South-east Asia's. China could also cut back on investments in the region. In addition, local banks could tighten credit, leading to higher defaults. In this gloomy scenario, the Moody's study warns that real GDP growth rates in South-east Asian countries could suddenly plummet this year, with Singapore being the worst hit. If economies in Europe and the US are also affected, that would impose further collateral damage on South-east Asia.

## OPTIMISTIC SCENARIO

But there are more optimistic scenarios. Some economists are betting that China will successfully navigate a soft landing. Its policymakers will balance the growth of the economy and the growth of debt by alternating between tightening credit when the economy starts humming and letting debt increase when the economy slows too much, as it is doing now. To boost consumption, they will cut value-added tax and ease restrictions on housing. They could also guide the value of the yuan downwards, to spur exports and help negate the effects of US tariffs – although this would entail the risk of inducing capital outflows and China being branded a "currency manipulator" by a pro-tariff Trump administration.

If all goes well, China could maintain what its leaders claim will be "reasonable and sustainable" growth. Nevertheless, the debt build-up and its increasing ineffectiveness in promoting growth will make it harder for China's mandarins to sustain their delicate balancing act. They can buy time, but for how long is the big question.

So as the world hopes for the best while watching China's economic drama unfold, it's worth bearing in mind what the late professor of economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Rudiger Dornbusch once said: "An economic crisis takes a much longer time coming than you think, and then it happens much faster than you would have thought."

vikram@sph.com.sg

## IN TOMORROW'S STRAITS TIMES

The Straits Times bureaus report on the impact of a China economic slowdown on other countries.





Above: Ms Meng Wanzhou (above), Huawei's chief financial officer, was arrested last month by the Canadian authorities in Vancouver at the United States' request. Right: Canada's ambassador to China, Mr John McCallum (left in picture) said last week Ms Meng stood a good chance of avoiding extradition to the US. His public assessment of the case came under sharp criticism. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (right) asked Mr McCallum to resign. PHOTOS: BLOOMBERG, REUTERS



# Canada's envoy to China fired over Huawei remarks

## He was criticised for comments on China exec's extradition to US

MONTREAL • Canada's ambassador to China has resigned after a series of diplomatic missteps that further complicated already strained relations between the two countries.

The resignation came days after the ambassador, Mr John McCallum, stunned seasoned diplomatic observers by saying that Ms Meng Wanzhou, chief financial officer of Chinese telecommunications firm Huawei who was arrested last month by the Canadian authorities in Vancouver at the United States' request, stood a good chance of avoiding extradition to the US.

His public assessment of the sensitive and high-profile case came un-

der sharp criticism, including from the leader of the opposition conservative party, Mr Andrew Scheer, who said Mr McCallum's comments threatened to politicise the case and called for him to be fired.

"Last night, I asked for and accepted John McCallum's resignation as Canada's ambassador to China," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said last Saturday.

Mr McCallum had back-pedalled last Thursday, saying that he mis-spoke. But a day later, following a news report quoting him saying it would be "great for Canada" if the US dropped its request to extradite the Huawei executive, he was once again under fire.

Canada is in the middle of a struggle between China and the US, two countries engaged in a protracted trade war.

ASKED TO RESIGN

**Last night, I asked for and accepted John McCallum's resignation as Canada's ambassador to China.**



PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU

Canada has vowed not to intervene politically in the Huawei case, which is pending in Canadian courts, making Mr McCallum's com-

ments all the more awkward. An angry China has characterised Ms Meng's arrest as an abuse of power by the Canadian authorities.

Canada arrested Ms Meng in Vancouver on Dec 1. On Dec 10, China seized two Canadians, former diplomat Michael Kovrig and tour operator Michael Spavor, on national security grounds.

Ms Meng is under house arrest at her US\$4.2 million (S\$5.7 million) mansion in Vancouver, while Kovrig and Spavor remain in custody and have received only rare visits from Canadian officials, including Mr McCallum.

A third Canadian, Robert Schellenberg, was sentenced to death by a Chinese court after initially receiving a jail term for alleged drug smuggling.

Mr Trudeau has called the Chi-

nese arrests "arbitrary" and urged Beijing to release Kovrig and Spavor. The US and a broad group of former envoys and academics have also called for their release.

The US is expected to formally request Ms Meng's extradition from Canada in the coming days. It has until Wednesday to make the request.

Once made, Canadian courts will decide whether she can be sent to the US, with a final determination made by Canada's Justice Minister.

Mr McCallum, a seasoned politician, is known to speak his mind.

A former academic, he has held a series of senior positions in Liberal governments, including as defence minister and as Mr Trudeau's immigration minister.

He played a leading role in Canada's decision to welcome thousands of Syrian refugees to the country.

The Huawei case also has an economic dimension for Canada that has strained relations with the world's second-largest economy.

Canada is reviewing whether to ban Huawei from its next-generation 5G wireless network, a move already taken or under consideration by some allies. Mr Ward Elcock, a former head of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, said last Thursday he believes Huawei poses a risk to Canada's 5G network because of China's ability to "direct" the company. NYTIMES, BLOOMBERG

## WTO set to probe Trump's tariffs on China



World Trade Organisation director-general Roberto Azevedo warned in Davos last Thursday that trade tensions are a threat to the entire international community. PHOTO: REUTERS

GENEVA • Tensions between the United States and China are about to get more complicated, with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) poised to begin an investigation into US President Donald Trump's tariffs on US\$250 billion (S\$338 billion) of Chinese goods.

Today, the Geneva-based arbiter of trade disputes will likely launch an inquiry into whether the US duties run afoul of a requirement that all WTO members give each other the same tariff treatment, as China asserts.

The investigation comes at a delicate moment between the world's two largest economies. A new round of trade talks is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, and if a deal is not reached by March 1, the Trump administration has threatened to raise the tariff rate on US\$200 billion in Chinese goods to 25 per cent from 10 per cent.

"This WTO case is especially significant because it deals with the central international legal issue in the US conduct of its trade war with China – whether the US can impose trade restrictions on China

in response to alleged Chinese WTO violations without first seeking dispute settlement in the WTO," Mr James Bacchus, a former Democratic congressman and one-time head of the WTO's appellate body, said in an e-mail.

"I believe these US tariffs are inconsistent with WTO obligations, but it will be left to my successors on the WTO appellate body to decide."

The WTO is already facing an existential threat over a hold the US has placed on new appellate judge nominations. Absent any reforms, the decision-making wing of the organisation will have too few judges to rule on cases by the end of the year.

This new probe could further antagonise the US, which sees the WTO as overstepping its authority.

This is China's second request for an inquiry on the matter, with the first one last month vetoed by the US. The investigation is likely to move ahead today because WTO rules prevent members from blocking a dispute inquiry a second time.

But China will not be expecting a resolution to the investigation any time soon due to a backlog in the

WTO dispute settlement system. So far, 23 disputes have been brought against the current US administration, including a European Union inquiry into tariffs levied against aluminium and steel imports.

"These trade tensions are not only a threat to the system, they are a threat to the entire international community," WTO director-general Roberto Azevedo said on a panel in Davos, Switzerland, last Thursday. "The risks are very real and there will be economic impact."

The case cuts to the heart of the US-China trade conflict because Mr Trump says the tariffs are necessary to counter an alleged Chinese campaign to steal American intellectual property.

China alleges that the US tariffs violate the WTO's most-favoured-nation provision because the measures fail to provide the same tariff treatment that the US offers to imports of all other WTO members. The US counters that the tariffs fall outside the WTO's remit because they address trade issues not specifically covered under WTO rules. BLOOMBERG

## High-stakes poker resumes as officials meet in Washington

WASHINGTON • With about a month left in their truce, senior US and Chinese officials will meet in Washington this week, hoping to move towards a deal to end their unprecedented trade war.

Beijing's trade envoy, Vice-Premier Liu He, will lead a 30-person delegation at the invitation of US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, who is heading the American effort.

At a meeting in Argentina last month, US President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping agreed to bury the hatchet provisionally – with Mr Trump delaying a sharp increase of US duties on US\$200 billion (S\$273 billion) of Chinese goods until March 1.

Washington has made its demands clear: China must agree to far-reaching "structural" reforms in its trade practices, curbing massive state intervention in markets and the alleged theft of American technological know-how, including through hacking and the forced transfer of intellectual property.

Mr Trump also wants to cut the soaring US trade deficit with China, which in 2017 hit a record US\$375 billion, not including trade in services.

Since last year, the world's two largest economies have exchanged tit-for-tat tariffs on more than

US\$360 billion in two-way trade, with the largest amount, more than US\$250 billion, imposed by Washington.

The protectionist moves by the United States have begun to weigh on the Chinese economy, which last year posted its slowest economic growth in nearly three decades, causing Mr Trump to claim he has the upper hand in the talks.

US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said last Thursday that Washington and Beijing remained "miles and miles" from the finish line in their talks, cautioning against putting too much hope for a final resolution at this week's talks.

"I think (the) negotiations will be critical in determining whether the Chinese are willing to talk about any of the structural issues the United States is concerned about," Mr Edward Alden, a trade expert at the Council on Foreign Relations, told Agence France-Presse.

Earlier this month, Chinese officials signalled they were open to reducing the trade imbalance but there has been scant sign of movement on Washington's tougher demands.

A deal could be especially hard to reach should Beijing prove unwilling to cede any ground on the state subsidies at the heart of Mr Xi's vision for industrial pre-eminence.

The Chinese are likely to reject

any US demand seen as an obstacle to the Made in China 2025 strategic plan, according to Mr Alden.

Launched in 2015, the plan aimed to achieve Chinese dominance in cutting-edge technologies that are likely critical to the future success of developed economies, including robotics, artificial intelligence, aerospace and electric vehicles.

Ms Betty Wang, senior China economist at ANZ Banking Group, said Beijing was likely to hold steadfast to its industrial planning.

"Made in China 2025 is a necessary strategy for China to achieve sustainable development," she said, adding that the general consensus held that China could not continue being the world's factory in order to grow.

"China's transformation to high-end manufacturing and high value-added services is also a step China must go through for its domestic sustainable development," she said.

Nevertheless, Chinese officials could offer a show of goodwill.

State media last month reported that Chinese lawmakers were considering new foreign investment regulations that would ban forced technological transfers – or the requirement that foreign companies fork over intellectual property as a condition for access to the huge Chinese market.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



## Cameron Highlands by-election

## BN credits win to Malay Muslim wave

## Malaysian opposition coalition leaders hail victory as first step towards returning to govt

PETALINGJAYA • Leaders of Malaysia's Umno-led Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition have attributed the victory it secured in the Cameron Highlands by-election to the rise of a Malay Muslim wave, heralding the win as the first step towards reclaiming Putrajaya after being ousted from power last year.

Umno vice-president Mohamed Khaled Nordin yesterday lauded BN candidate Ramli Mohd Nor's win in Saturday's by-election, which saw him becoming the first person from the indigenous Orang Asli community to be elected as a Member of Parliament.

He won the seat by a 3,238-vote majority in a four-corner contest against ruling Pakatan Harapan (PH) alliance candidate M. Manogaran and independent candidates Sallehudin Ab Talib and Wong Seng Yee.

Umno, the BN's biggest component party, and the fellow opposition Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) had cooperated for the by-election, with PAS staying out of the contest to back the BN candidate.

"If the understanding between Umno and PAS is further cultivated

and mobilised effectively, it will give rise to a large and important Malay Muslim wave that could silence Pakatan Harapan," Datuk Seri Khaled was quoted as saying by The Star news website.

"Even more so when the Malays and bumiputeras realise that the voices of the Malays in Pakatan Harapan are very small and represent a minority that is constantly ignored," he said in a media statement.

Mr Khaled said PH is uncomfortable with the outcome of the Cameron Highlands poll, as it does not want to see the Malays and the opposition parties uniting and cooperating.

He noted that the result also showed that voters were confident that Umno and PAS – rather than PH member parties such as the Democratic Action Party (DAP) – were the best combination to champion the Malay and bumiputera cause without denying other races.

"Malays and bumiputeras will not be influenced and choose a party such as DAP, which clearly rejects the concept of the special position of the Malays and bumiputeras

through its Malaysian Malaysia ideology," he said.

Umno acting president Mohamad Hasan hailed BN's win, calling it a first step towards returning to government. "To Pakatan Harapan, the win in Cameron Highlands is the start of Barisan's revival. And we are not going to stop till we wrest Putrajaya, God willing," he said according to The Star.

He added that BN and PAS would continue to collaborate for the benefit of the people. "Although we do not have a formal alliance or cooperation, both parties want the best for Malaysia. We will also continue to work together for Malay and Muslim unity," he said.

Meanwhile, former Umno president Najib Razak, who campaigned for BN in the by-election, hit out at Mr Manogaran for claiming that the coalition had played up racial issues to win at the polls. "What he had said is not true. We did not play any racial issues to win votes," he was quoted telling reporters, according to the Malay Mail.

Mr Manogaran had previously contested the seat and lost on a DAP ticket at last year's election.

The by-election was held after the Election Court nullified BN candidate C. Sivarajah's victory last year on the grounds of vote-buying by BN during the election campaign.



Voters queueing up at a polling centre in Bertam Valley to cast their ballots in the Cameron Highlands by-election on Saturday. PHOTO: BERNAMA

## Malaysia stripped of hosting para swim meet over Israel ban

LONDON • The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) yesterday stripped Malaysia of the right to host the 2019 world para swimming championships after the country banned Israeli athletes from participating.

The championships, a qualifier for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics, had been scheduled for Kuching between July 29 and Aug 4. The IPC said a new venue would be sought for the same dates, although there might have to be some flexibility in the light of circumstances.

"All World Championships must be open to all eligible athletes and nations to compete safely and free from discrimination," said IPC president Andrew Parsons in a statement after a meeting of the IPC gov-

erning board in London.

"When a host country excludes athletes from a particular nation, for political reasons, then we have absolutely no alternative but to look for a new Championships host."

He said that when Malaysia was awarded the championships in 2017, the IPC had been given assurances that all eligible athletes and countries would be allowed to participate with their safety assured.

"Since then, there has been a change of political leadership and the new Malaysian government has different ideas," said Mr Parsons.

Malaysia, a majority-Muslim country that does not maintain diplomatic relations with Israel, announced this month that it would bar Israelis from any event held in

the South-east Asia nation.

Israel had condemned the ban as "shameful" and said the decision was inspired by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's "rabid anti-Semitism".

But Malaysian Youth and Sports Minister Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman justified the action.

"Malaysia stands firmly with our decision on the ground of humanity and compassion for the Palestinian plight. We will not compromise," he said in a statement issued to the media yesterday.

He added that if hosting an international sporting event was more important than standing up for Palestinians, that meant Malaysia had truly lost its moral compass.

REUTERS, THE STAR/ASIA NEWS NETWORK

## Fish-bombing killing east Sabah's marine life: WWF

KOTA KINABALU • The town of Semporna on the east side of the Malaysian state of Sabah is known for being the gateway to some of the world's best diving sites, including Mabul Island.

However, conservationists warn that fish-bombing is threatening the marine ecosystem there.

"At least 86 per cent of the corals in the district are on the verge of destruction due to fish-bombing activities," according to World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Malaysia's Semporna Priority Conservation Area team leader Choo Poh Leem.

"Such actions are also leading to the extinction of marine life," she said during an awareness pro-

gramme with parents, teachers and students in Semporna last Friday.

The practice of killing turtles for meat, taking turtle eggs and harvesting them for food or selling them was also a huge problem in Semporna, said Ms Choo.

She said turtle-viewing and the release of hatchlings were a key part of tourism in Semporna. But if the community kept killing the turtles or taking their eggs, there would be no more turtles left to see, she said.

A person found with one turtle egg can be fined up to RM250,000 (\$82,000). Last October, two Filipinos were sentenced to three years' jail and fined RM100,000 each by the Tawau Sessions Court

for hunting and killing critically endangered green turtles in Sempornawaters.

Meanwhile, Ms Choo stressed that enforcement agencies must be more proactive and play a bigger role in making sure that such activities are stopped. "Enforcement of laws is vital to helping curb fish bombing," she said.

Towards this end, Ms Choo said WWF's Semporna Priority Conservation Area team would be working with enforcement agencies to hold a workshop on the issue on Feb 26 at the Semporna Fisheries Department office.

Deputy Chief Minister Jaujan Sambakong, who officiated the event, reminded the community to be responsible and help protect the environment.

"Our nature is our treasure. Without them we will not be able to introduce Sabah to the world," he said. THE STAR/ASIA NEWS NETWORK

Here to make lives better

**FORTUNE DRAW** | 27 Dec 2018 – 20 Feb 2019

WORTH \$60,000 EACH

1 WINNER WEEKLY\*

**6 MAZDA CX-3 2.0 SOUL RED CRYSTAL**

**LEFT TO BE WON.**

Don't miss your chance today!

GET 1 CHANCE WITH EVERY \$30 SPEND\*

For more information, visit [fairprice.com.sg/cny2019](http://fairprice.com.sg/cny2019)

\*Value without COE. \*T&Cs apply. Car image for illustration purpose only. Specifications may vary.

Official Partner:

**TODAY ONLY**

28 Jan 2019

\*Limited to 4 sets per product per customer.

**8 DAYS TO CNY**

**SAVE \$2.67**

**\$11.88 per pack**

PASAR China Swatow Gift Pack 16's/18's U.P. \$14.55

**SAVE \$3.30**

**\$5.75 per pack**

COCA-COLA Sparkling With HCS/Sparkling Variety Pack 12's x 320ml U.P. \$9.05

**SAVE \$4.60**

**3 for \$5.90**

FRESH South America Blueberries 125g U.P. 3 for \$10.50

**SAVE \$3.45**

**\$7.50 per pack**

FAIRPRICE Cashews Value Pack Natural Baked/Butter/Unsalted Roasted 400g U.P. \$10.95

**SAVE UP TO \$2.55**

**\$4.95 per pack**

SAMYANG Hot Chicken Ramen Assorted 5's x (120g - 140g) U.P. \$6.90/\$7.50

**SAVE \$4.55**

**\$32.95 per tin**

ENSURE LIFE Chocolate/Strawberry/Wheat/Vanilla 850g U.P. \$37.50

**SAVE UP TO \$1.40**

**\$3.95 per pack**

QUAKER Instant Oatmeal 800g + 200g/Quick Cook Oatmeal 800g + 200g/Whole Rolled Oats 800g U.P. \$5.10/\$5.35

**SAVE \$6.45**

**\$46.55 per pack**

BRAND'S Essence Of Chicken (ORIGINAL) VALUE PACK! 3 Packs x 12 bottles x 68ml U.P. \$53

QUALITY VALUE SERVICE

\*Available at selected NTUC FairPrice outlets. Products and variants availability varies from store to store. For more details, please call 4552 2722. Offers valid on 28/1/2019 only. Advertised offers are available from 0400hrs onwards. Limited to 4 units per product per customer unless otherwise stated. While stocks last. We reserve the right to limit quantities. Prices are correct at time of printing. Trimmings and props not included. Traders not allowed. Only selected items are available for online purchase. For operating hours, please visit [fairpriceon.com.sg](http://fairpriceon.com.sg) >> Store Locator.

Enjoy more ways to shop at

FairPriceXtra FairPricefinest

FairPriceShop FairPriceon

free click&collect on orders over \$29

free delivery on orders over \$30 Limited Period

[fairpriceon.com.sg](http://fairpriceon.com.sg)

SCAN TO SHOP

an NTUC Social Enterprise



# India's Sikkim state proposes universal basic income scheme

Ruling party to include idea in manifesto ahead of upcoming state elections

CITIZEN STAKEHOLDERS

In (the) light of this, we have been toying with the idea of starting a UBI. We want to ensure every citizen is empowered to find ways to become a stakeholder within the system.



MR PREM DAS RAI, SDF party leader.

Debarshi Dasgupta  
India Correspondent  
In New Delhi

Punching above its weight, the tiny Indian Himalayan state of Sikkim has proposed to introduce a universal basic income (UBI) for all its residents, the first such move by any Indian state.

It has been pitched by the state's ruling Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) as an idea that will be included in its manifesto for the state elections due in another three months.

"It is the next leap of faith we want to take," SDF leader Prem Das Rai, the only member of the Lower House of Parliament from Sikkim, told The Straits Times. He said his

party intends to institute such a measure within three years of being re-elected to power.

This move comes at a time when recent media reports speculated that even the Narendra Modi-led federal government could introduce some form of UBI scheme ahead of the parliamentary elections that are expected to be held around the same time as the elections in Sikkim.

Prime Minister Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party suffered an electoral blow last month, losing power in three key states. A cash transfer scheme for India's citizens has been seen as a way to recoup some of the lost goodwill.

A UBI scheme involves a regular, guaranteed amount paid universally and unconditionally by the government to all citizens. It has been pitched as a way to replace India's extensive welfare schemes that are often poorly targeted and marred by pilferage and corruption.

The idea of a UBI has gained greater currency with improved access to bank accounts in the country. A 2017 World Bank report said 80 per cent of India's adults had a bank account in their name.

The idea of introducing a UBI featured prominently in the Indian Ministry of Finance's 2016-17 Economic Survey. It suggested an annual transfer of 7,620 rupees (\$145) to 75 per cent of India's population to lift all, with the exception of India's absolute poorest, above a 2011-12 threshold for poverty.

The survey puts the cost of such a scheme at 4.9 per cent of India's gross domestic product (GDP). Existing subsidy schemes would have to be discontinued to avoid this additional cost on the government Budget. The federal government had allocated around 5 per cent of its GDP on 950 subsidies and welfare schemes in the 2015-16 financial year.

Mr Rai said the proposed scheme is likely to cover all of Sikkim's estimated 610,577 residents. The finer details of how much it will cost the state exchequer and the amount to be paid to each individual are still being worked out, he added.

Much of the funding for this ambitious scheme will be drawn from revenue generated from hydropower and tourism – two of the state's key economic strengths.

Sikkim has better socio-economic indices than most other Indian states, with considerable progress recorded in literacy, poverty alleviation, sanitation and organic agriculture, among other fields. Those below the poverty line in the state number around 8 per cent of the population, compared with the national average of around 22 per cent. Its annual per capita income level of 270,572 rupees is also among the top three in the country.

"We have come far ahead (than other states) in terms of giving access to all kinds of benefits and opportunities to our citizens. Sikkim,

therefore, is an outlier," said Mr Rai.

"In (the) light of this, we have been toying with the idea of starting a UBI. We want to ensure every citizen is empowered to find ways to become a stakeholder within the system," he added.

Proponents of the UBI argue that it helps foster an entrepreneurial ecosystem among those who may otherwise not take the risk to start a business venture.

An unconditional cash transfer experiment in the state of Madhya Pradesh by Sewa Bharat, a trade union of self-employed women, in partnership with United Nations Children's Fund in 2011 and 2012 had reported encouraging results. It found the money transferred was spent on nutrition, health, education and productive assets, among other things. It countered a widely held paternalistic view that poor households may not use cash transfers wisely and waste it on items like alcohol.

Detractors of UBI, on the other hand, say it may lead to a situation where the state could consider itself absolved of all responsibility to provide services such as education and healthcare, which the private sector may not have an incentive to provide.

Noted economist and Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, in an address at the Visva-Bharati University in Shantiniketan this month, had said implementing UBI in India could lead to more privatisation as people would spend more on private education and healthcare.

While the Economic Survey did not push for an immediate implementation of a UBI, it called for a serious public deliberation on the matter. If it is implemented, Sikkim's trendsetting move will provide the rest of the country with an answer on how to proceed on securing a basic minimum income for its citizens.

debarshi@sph.com.sg

## Maduro rejects election ultimatum

ISTANBUL • Venezuela's embattled President Nicolas Maduro has rejected an international ultimatum to call elections within eight days and says opposition leader Juan Guaido has violated the country's Constitution by declaring himself leader.

"They should withdraw this ultimatum. No one can give us an ultimatum," Mr Maduro said in an interview with CNN Turk aired yesterday.

Mr Maduro also said he was open to dialogue and that meeting US President Donald Trump was improbable but not impossible.

Washington, which has recognised Mr Guaido as Venezuela's leader, on Saturday urged the world to "pick a side" and financially disconnect from Mr Maduro's government.

Britain, Germany, France and Spain all said they would recognise Mr Guaido if Mr Maduro failed to call fresh elections within eight days, an ultimatum Russia said was "absurd" and the Venezuelan Foreign Minister called "child-like".

The United States, Canada, most Latin American nations and many European states have labelled Mr Maduro's second-term election win last May fraudulent.

Mr Maduro retains the loyalty of the armed forces, though Venezuela's top military envoy to the US defected to Mr Guaido's side on Saturday. Both Mr Guaido and Mr Maduro have called for demonstrations this week, raising fears of further violence.

Separately, Mr Maduro has softened his demand that all US embassy staff withdraw from the country, asserting that he wanted his own diplomats "to defend Venezuelan interests in the US".

Instead, he said the two countries will seek an agreement to replace the embassies with "interest offices" in their respective capitals within 30 days. REUTERS, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, BLOOMBERG

## Facing up to polluted air



Participants in the Kolkata Clean Air awareness campaign wearing face masks and holding placards during campaign in Kolkata, India, yesterday. According to the World Health Organisation, the city has the worst air quality of any major city in the world. Local media reports state that India is the world's second most-polluted country, with life expectancy reportedly being reduced by more than 10 years for the average resident in the capital. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

## Letters with suspected cyanide sent to 9 Japan firms

TOKYO • Nine Japanese companies, including drugmakers and a newspaper publisher, have received blackmail letters containing white powder suspected to be cyanide, police and local media said yesterday.

The letters were sent under the names of executed members of the Aum Shinrikyo – the Japanese doomsday cult behind the deadly 1995 sarin gas attack in Tokyo –

and demanded 35 million won (\$42,350) in bitcoins, a police spokesman told Agence France-Presse.

"Major pharmaceutical and other companies... received envelopes with threatening letters and a powdery substance" suspected to be cyanide, he said, without identifying the companies.

According to the spokesman, the

letter said: "I will make fake medicine containing potassium cyanide and distribute it," and warned "a tragedy will happen" if the money was not transferred by Feb 22.

Local media said the names on the letters – which were received on Friday – included Shoko Asahara, the charismatic leader of the sect, who was executed with 12 of

his one-time followers in July last year.

The white powdery substance was later confirmed to be cyanide, the Asahi Shimbun newspaper reported, adding that a similar envelope was also sent to the Tokyo headquarters of the Mainichi Shimbun newspaper.

A pharmaceutical firm in Osaka and the Hokkaido branch of a

Tokyo-based food company also received letters the same day, Kyodo News reported, though the police declined to name the companies.

Similar threatening letters were sent to some pharmaceutical companies in Osaka in January last year, Jiji Press reported.

The letters also carried different addresses, such as detention facilities in Tokyo, Kyodo News reported.

## WorldBriefs

### Thai band singer says sorry for Nazi blunder

BANGKOK • A member of Thailand's most popular all-girl band has apologised for wearing a shirt with a Nazi flag featuring a swastika, after her television appearance last Friday drew "shock and dismay" from the Israeli embassy.

The faux pas was committed by Pichayapa "Namsai" Natha, one of the singers of BNK48, when she wore the red-and-black top complete with a swastika during the group's rehearsal.

The deputy chief of mission of the Israeli Embassy in Bangkok took to Twitter the following day to express "shock and dismay" at the outfit, given that yesterday was International Holocaust Remembrance Day. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

### Longer pre-Brexit sessions in UK House

LONDON • British MPs could sit longer hours and their February holiday may be scrapped as the government races to pass its Brexit legislation before UK leaves the EU on March 29, Downing Street said yesterday.

Prime Minister Theresa May's government is looking at making the House of Commons sit on more Fridays – which it does not normally do – and extend debating time well into the evening on some days. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

### Heavy rain batters north-east Australia

CAIRNS • Communities were cut off, farmers stranded and cows washed offshore as heavy rain pelted north-east Australia yesterday, with one major river breaking 118-year-old records.

The Bureau of Meteorology said Queensland's Daintree River rose to 12.6m – a level not seen in over a century. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE





Rescue workers searching among the debris on Saturday for hundreds of people missing after a Vale dam burst near Brumadinho in Brazil's Minas Gerais state the day before, unleashing a torrent of mud and burying the miner's facilities and nearby homes. The confirmed death toll rose to 37 by yesterday morning, the fire department reported. PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

## 24,000 evacuate amid risk of new Brazil dam burst

BRUMADINHO (Brazil) • Firefighters called for the evacuation to higher ground of some 24,000 people from the Brazilian town hit by deadly mud flow from an earlier mining dam rupture, as a second dam threatened to collapse.

Sirens began before dawn yesterday, triggered by dangerous water levels at a tailings dam still standing in the Vale facility near Brumadinho in Minas Gerais state.

The evacuation efforts diverted attention from a search for hundreds of people missing after last Friday's dam burst unleashed a torrent of mud, burying the miner's facilities and nearby homes, according to the fire department.

"Our work is completely focused on the evacuation," Mr Pedro Aihara, a spokesman for the state fire department, said.

The confirmed death toll rose to 37 bodies found by yesterday morning, the fire department reported.

That already makes the disaster more deadly than a 2015 tailings dam collapse at an iron ore mine less than 100km to the east, belonging to Samarco Mineracao, a Vale joint venture with BHP Group.

Meanwhile, the Brazilian judicial authorities have frozen 11 billion reales (\$3.95 billion) in assets of the Vale mining company after the dam collapse.

The public prosecutor's office of the state of Minas Gerais made the announcement late on Saturday. The order said the firm's real estate and vehicles would be seized if it could not come up with the full amount.

The company also has been hit with fines by the federal and state government totalling some US\$92.5 million. REUTERS, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

# Aussie mass fish deaths spark water debate

## Experts claim deaths not due to drought but farmers extracting too much water from river

**Jonathan Pearlman**  
For The Straits Times  
In Sydney

Australia has experienced a bizarre environmental disaster in recent weeks as more than a million fish have died in an inland river, prompting debate about whether too much water is being extracted by farmers.

Two main instances of mass deaths have occurred – in December and earlier this month – in the lower Darling River, which forms part of the nation's food bowl. The incidents occurred near Menindee, a small outback town in western New South Wales. Other smaller outbreaks have also occurred.

The federal and New South Wales governments have insisted that drought is to blame.

But experts believe that the authorities have mishandled the distribution of water from the rivers and that upstream farmers have been allowed to extract too much water to irrigate crops.

In a video that went viral, two farmers who live near Menindee filmed themselves standing in the water as they hold up dead Murray cod.

Mr Rob McBride and Mr Dick Arnold said the deaths were a "disgrace" that had nothing to do with the drought and were due to cotton farmers and mishandling of water allocations by the government.

**The federal and New South Wales governments have insisted that drought is to blame. But experts believe that the authorities have mishandled the distribution of water from the rivers and that upstream farmers have been allowed to extract too much water to irrigate crops.**

"This is the most disgusting thing I've ever seen," Mr McBride said in the video. "This is nothing to do with the drought. This is a man-made disaster."

The apocalyptic sight of masses of rotting fish on the banks of waterways has sparked public anger and caused one MP who visited the scene to vomit.

A smaller case of mass death was discovered last Monday on the banks of Lake Inverell, about 1,000km from the original incidents.

The immediate causes have been a drought and an outbreak of blue-green algae due to higher water temperatures. The algae decomposes when it dies, causing oxygen to be sucked out of the water, which can be fatal for fish. A storm and then a sudden cold front earlier this month are believed to have killed much of the algae.

But some say that the river system should be able to cope with hot weather conditions and have blamed mishandled allocation of water to farmers from the Murray-Darling basin, a vast river system in south-east Australia, which produces A\$22 billion (\$21.3 billion) worth of food and fibre.

One of the biggest river networks in the world, it accounts for about a third of Australia's food supply for domestic and overseas consumption. This includes more than half of Australia's grain, as well as rice, cotton, canola, fruits and vegetables.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has blamed the deaths on the "devastating impact" of the drought. Facing pressure to address the deaths, his government announced a review last week into the causes and how to prevent further catastrophes.

"These fish kills were predicated by one of the largest droughts we've ever seen in this nation's history," Agriculture and Water Resources Minister David Littleproud told reporters. "These events are natural, they have happened for centuries. They also happen in blackwater events and floods."

Experts and environmental

groups have warned for years about the potential dangers of extracting excessive amounts of water from the system. State and federal governments oversee caps on the amount of water that irrigators can use for their crops, but critics say too much has been removed, particularly from northern upstream areas.

Professor John Williams from the Australian National University said irrigators in northern parts of the

basin should have their water usage reduced by 30 per cent to 40 per cent. He said the authorities should aim to manage water flow in rivers through drought periods "without killing all the fish".

"We want working rivers, we want irrigation, but we need to know how much we can take and regulate it pretty strongly," he told ABC News.

But irrigators and cotton growers, who have been blamed for excessive water use, say the problems are due

to drought. They say upstream farmers have taken only as much water as they are permitted, pointing out that many waterways in northern areas are running dry.

The federal government's review is due to be completed by March.

In the meantime, much of Australia is in the grip of a severe heatwave that is only likely to put further pressure on the ailing river system.

jonathanmpearlman@gmail.com



Independent New South Wales MP Jeremy Buckingham holding a decades-old Murray cod, killed in a mass fish death in the Darling River. With him are farmers Dick Arnold (left) and Rob McBride. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

## Poll: Most Germans want motorway speed limits

BERLIN • A majority of Germans favour setting maximum speed limits for Germany's famously fast Autobahns to help battle climate change, according to a poll.

Some 52 per cent of those polled wanted vehicle speeds limited to between 120kmh and 140kmh, the poll conducted by the Emnid institute and published by Bild am Sonntag newspaper last Saturday showed. Forty-six per cent opposed such limits.

A government-appointed committee studying the future of transport is looking at ending the "no limits" sections on motorways as part

of a broader proposal to help Germany meet European Union emissions targets.

Not everyone is on board with the plans. Transport Minister Andreas Scheuer, a conservative from Bavaria, the home state of carmakers Daimler and Audi, said he opposed setting speed limits on Germany's decades-old motorway network.

"The principle of freedom has proven itself. Whoever wants to drive 120kmh can drive 120kmh, and those who want to go faster can do that too. Why this constant micro-management?" he said.

Germany could be hit with heavy

EU fines if it fails to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and poisonous nitrogen oxides. Transport emissions, which have not fallen since 1990, are a particular target for reductions.

The government is torn between the need to protect Germany's crucial car industry – buffeted by costly emissions cheating scandals in recent years – and the need to cut greenhouse gases to meet EU and domestic climate goals.

Imposing a motorway speed limit of 130kmh, fuel tax hikes and quotas for electric and hybrid car sales, along with ending tax breaks for diesel cars, could generate half the cuts in greenhouse gas emissions needed, the committee said in a paper reported by Reuters this month.

The committee's findings are to be incorporated into a climate change law that the government wants to enact this year. REUTERS

### Car insurance due?

# Pay Less or Get \$100!

(Even if you don't buy from us!)

**Got a renewal notice from your current insurer?**

**If your renewal quotation premium is lower than ours, we will give you \$100. No need to buy anything. It's a win-win.**

✓ Pay only for what you need

✓ NO agent commission

✓ Great customer reviews

Full details at [budgetdirect.com.sg](http://budgetdirect.com.sg). Terms and conditions apply.

For cheaper car, motorcycle & travel insurance premium, get an online quote in 30 seconds at [budgetdirect.com.sg/savenow](http://budgetdirect.com.sg/savenow) or call **6540 2100**.

**Budget Direct insurance**

Car Insurance   Motorcycle Insurance   Travel Insurance

Budget Direct Insurance Policies are protected under the Policy Owners' Protection Scheme which is administered by the Singapore Deposit Insurance Corporation (SDIC). Coverage for your Policy is automatic and no further action is needed from you. For details on the types of benefits under the scheme and the coverage limits, you may visit the websites of SDIC ([www.sdic.org.sg](http://www.sdic.org.sg)) or the General Insurance Association of Singapore (GIA) ([www.gia.org.sg](http://www.gia.org.sg)) or contact us at [help@budgetdirect.com.sg](mailto:help@budgetdirect.com.sg).

We have been awarded the Trusted Service Award 2018 by Feello for delivering exceptional service, based on customers' reviews collected.





- Creative learning app
- Keyword builder

- Get ready
- Learn through stories

- Strengthen linguistic ability
- Appreciate depth of Chinese language

- Outlet for growth and reflection
- Nurture creative expressions

- Widen horizons
- Experience beauty of Chinese culture

- Focused and  
taster sessions
- Sharpen skills or  
just have fun

- Constant buddy
- Intelligent and interactive exchanges

CONTACT BY EMAIL: CONTENT SOLUTIONS



# OPINION

THE STRAITS TIMES

**Ng Yat Chung**  
SPH Chief Executive Officer  
**Anthony Tan**  
Deputy Chief Executive Officer  
**Ignatius Low** Chief Marketing Officer  
**Glen Francis** Chief Technology Officer  
**Chua Wee Phong** Executive Vice-President (Circulation)

**Warren Fernandez**  
Editor-in-Chief  
(English/Malay/Tamil Media Group) and The Straits Times Editor  
**Sumiko Tan**  
The Straits Times Executive Editor  
**Dominic Nathan**  
Managing Editor  
(English/Malay/Tamil Media Group)  
**Helen Chia, Paul Jacob, Rahul Pathak, Lim Chuan Huat, Ravi Velloor, Vikram Khanna** Associate Editors  
**Paul Cheong** Night Editor  
**Ong Hwee Hwee** Digital Editor

**Zakir Hussain** News Editor  
**Abdul Hafiz** Associate News Editor and Sunday Editor  
**Li Xueying** Enterprise Editor  
**Kor Kian Beng**  
Defence and Security Editor  
**Jeremy Au Yong** Foreign Editor  
**Susan Long** Lifestyle Editor  
**Lee Yulin** Sports Editor  
**Chua Mui Hoong, Audrey Quek** Opinion Editors  
**Peter Williams** Art Editor  
**Stephanie Yeow** Photo Editor  
**Mathew Pereira** Forum Editor

The Straits Times says

## No let-up in guard against terrorism

The threat to Singapore from terrorism remains high, according to a sobering assessment released by the Ministry of Home Affairs last week. The prime reason is the barbaric Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which still looms large despite being uprooted from the vast tracts it seized in Iraq and Syria five years ago. This is the central message from the Singapore Terrorism Threat Assessment Report 2019. While no credible intelligence exists, for now, of an attack being planned against Singapore, continuing radicalisation is a menace. Eight self-radicalised individuals, including five involved in ISIS-linked cases, were dealt with under the Internal Security Act (ISA) in the past two years. This brings to 22 the number of Singapore-

ans dealt with under the ISA since 2015. The comparable figure between 2007 and 2014 was only 11.

Developments in Singapore are part of the larger trends taking place in South-east Asia. There can be no doubt that ISIS, which slots the region under the “East Asia division” of its global caliphate, remains vested here. Last May, Indonesia witnessed its deadliest ISIS-linked attacks: the Surabaya bombings that killed 28. There were 12 other attacks and 13 foiled plots. In Malaysia, four plots were disrupted and more than 80 militants arrested last year. More attacks are feared if some of the estimated 1,000 South-east Asian ISIS fighters return, bearing battlefield skills and combat experience. Another worry is the release of hun-

dreds of prisoners serving terrorism-related charges. Last week, Indonesia came close to granting parole to Abu Bakar Bashir, the radical cleric suspected of masterminding the 2002 Bali bombings. It backtracked after outrage that Bashir, the spiritual head of the regional Jemaah Islamiah (JI) militant outfit, may draw more to his path.

There are heightened concerns that JI and other Al-Qaeda-linked groups have been regrouping and may launch attacks. The region has to respond with alacrity to the mutating threat. Nearly two decades after the 9/11 attacks, terrorism remains a potent threat across the world. Perhaps there can be no end to the geopolitical rivalries, such as between the Sunnis and the Shi’ites, that

create space for terrorism to fester. The underlying causes for terrorism – whether poverty, ignorance, or social or political disaffection – are also unlikely to be addressed soon.

Glaringly absent, still, is an effective counter-terrorism strategy aligned across countries. But in an encouraging sign that the West is streamlining its excessively legalistic approach to tackling terrorism, a landmark ruling in Britain this month allowed the extradition of two men behind heinous ISIS killings. The men, part of a four-man cell dubbed “The Beatles” for their British accent and thought responsible for 27 beheadings in Syria, will now face trial in the US, where the law has more teeth and retains the death penalty.

GlobalAffairs

## Will politics be better with citizens’ assemblies?

Athenian-style democracy, with help from Twitter and Facebook, will enhance grassroots engagement – but it remains a double-edged sword



Jonathan Eyal

Global Affairs Correspondent

LONDON • As a first step, it was mildly successful. Responding to repeated waves of violent protests from citizens angered by everything from rising fuel prices to social and economic exclusion, French President Emmanuel Macron ordered his ministers and officials to launch a “grand debate” with his country’s population. And the public did respond. The President himself spent an entire day on his feet, pacing up and down, answering questions from hundreds of mayors and local government officers about every topic they cared to raise. And over the past two weeks alone, more than 500 further public meetings were either held or scheduled throughout France with the aim of “building a consensus, a new contract for the nation”, as Mr Macron put it.

It remains to be seen whether the French President will ever achieve such a lofty objective as forging a new national contract. Still, Mr Macron may have succeeded in reminding his countrymen and women that they have other ways to express their frustrations than donning high-visibility motorists’ gear to march up and down and smash shop windows or burn cars, as some of the so-called “yellow vests” protesters have done over the past few months.

Either way, the French experiment of conducting massive public debates in times of national crises is being carefully watched by other governments in Europe. For France is testing a new concept that is gaining increased attention from policy experts throughout the Western world: that of convening periodic “citizens’ assemblies”,

gatherings that bring together voters to debate controversial decisions.

If handled well, such assemblies may provide answers to challenges that politicians alone are unable to tackle. But the concept of citizens’ assemblies also poses serious dangers. For instead of strengthening current political arrangements, such assemblies could end up destroying existing political systems without replacing them with anything more durable.

### NOTABLE EXAMPLES

Although they have attracted little attention until now, the idea of citizens’ assemblies has been with us for quite some time. Back in the mid-1990s, a governor of the US state of Texas, a certain person who went by the name of George W. Bush, organised what he called a “deliberative poll”, to ask people whether they wished to pay more to have their electricity generated by wind instead of fossil fuel. The people consulted said “yes”, and Texas still leads the United States in wind power, a remarkable feat for a state synonymous with the petroleum industry.

In the wake of the Fukushima disaster in 2011, Japan also engaged in a public consultation on nuclear power. So did the Netherlands, which asked people how they felt about reforming the country’s electoral law. And Canada frequently convenes what it calls “reference panels” to discuss things such as the condition of public services.

But probably the most interesting experiment was conducted in Ireland back in 2016, when the country decided to reconsider its abortion laws. In a nation that used to define itself by its Catholic faith, the question of legalising abortion was bound to be deeply controversial, especially since the Irish already rejected the option in a referendum held three decades ago.

So instead of launching straight into the debate, the Irish Parliament decided to call for a citizens’ assembly that heard evidence from politicians, priests,

experts and advocates of every stripe, and received an astonishing 13,000 submissions from members of the public.

The Irish citizens’ assembly surprised the country’s politicians: It recommended lifting the ban on abortion by a majority of two to one of those who took part in the consultation. And on May 25 last year, the people of Ireland approved the removal of a constitutional ban on abortions by almost exactly the same majority as that of the citizens’ assembly.

The Irish experiment seems to suggest that not only are ordinary people sometimes more radical than their leaders in pushing for change, but that a citizens’ assembly is also an accurate predictor of the broader, general public mood.

It is therefore not surprising that politicians in Britain are now advocating holding a similar citizens’ assembly to discuss whether the country should leave the European Union, in a desperate attempt to break the logjam on the subject that is now paralysing all British decision-making.

And it’s easy to see why the idea of citizens’ assemblies is so alluring. For it provides a seemingly painless way for politicians to tackle controversial issues; all that politicians need to do is accept that a controversial matter should be debated, without agreeing to do anything about it.

### OF LOBBIES AND LEGITIMACY

The deliberations of citizens’ assemblies can also help politicians to bypass entrenched business lobbies that would otherwise stifle debate; it is doubtful, for instance, that in the Texas of the 1990s, measures to promote wind power would have succeeded without

evidence provided by citizens’ assemblies.

Yet probably the biggest advantage of such assemblies is that they promise to improve the legitimacy of existing political systems. The idea that we elect our representatives only once every four or five years and then allow them to do more or less as they see fit is one that emerged two centuries ago, at a time when both communications and the pace of life were different.

We now have the technology to conduct polls on a daily basis. We have the social platforms to galvanise our feelings and aspirations, and to channel our frustrations. Would it not improve our political systems if we were to use these technological advances to make decisions in a direct manner, or at least be consulted more often?

More than two millennia ago, the Greek city state of Athens pioneered direct power by allowing all its male citizens to vote on every law and executive decision. For countless generations thereafter, Athens was held in awe throughout the Western world as the city that gave birth to the purest form of democracy.

The Athenian model, which worked for the estimated 30,000 voters of the city at that time, could not be replicated in bigger nations. Today, however, technology allows it to be revived. Holding citizens’ assemblies, the argument goes, is a first step in erasing the growing gulf between leaders and those led, between politicians and the public. From Athens, therefore, back to Athens, via Twitter and Facebook.

It is an interesting idea, but potentially a dangerous one.

First, it’s worth recalling that all the examples of citizens’ assemblies we have to date are

actually nothing more than glorified opinion polls. The Irish “assembly” on abortion involved 99 selected people, picked by the government to represent every walk of life, age and interest, but still a minute sample for a nation of five million. The Canadian, Japanese and Dutch examples were, proportionally, not much bigger either.

The current “grand debate” in France dwarfs all other examples, by promising to engage millions rather than just a handful of citizens. But precisely because participation is open to everyone, the French debate is much more general and nebulous.

And although President Macron claimed that “nothing is ruled out” from public debate, some key questions – such as the budget, the taxation system and the government’s current economic reform plans – are kept firmly off limits.

The French President was right to exclude these topics, for evidence abounds from many countries that voters overwhelmingly support extra government spending but oppose higher taxes. Still, the fact that such critical topics had to be excluded was a reminder of the enduring importance of representative rather than direct democracy of the citizens’ assembly kind.

### WISDOM OF THE MASSES?

More importantly, the assumption that promoters of citizens’ assemblies often take for granted is that when consulted, people will come up with sensible conclusions. Sometimes, but not always.

Just look at Switzerland, an otherwise developed and enlightened country that has the nearest example of a direct

democracy with plenty of referendums. Astonishingly, the country did not allow all its women to vote until the early 1970s, because its males opposed the idea, and there was no other way of changing the system. More recently, the Swiss also voted to ban the construction of mosques’ minarets because it offended their Christian sensibilities. The divide between participatory democracy and mob rule is often a fine one.

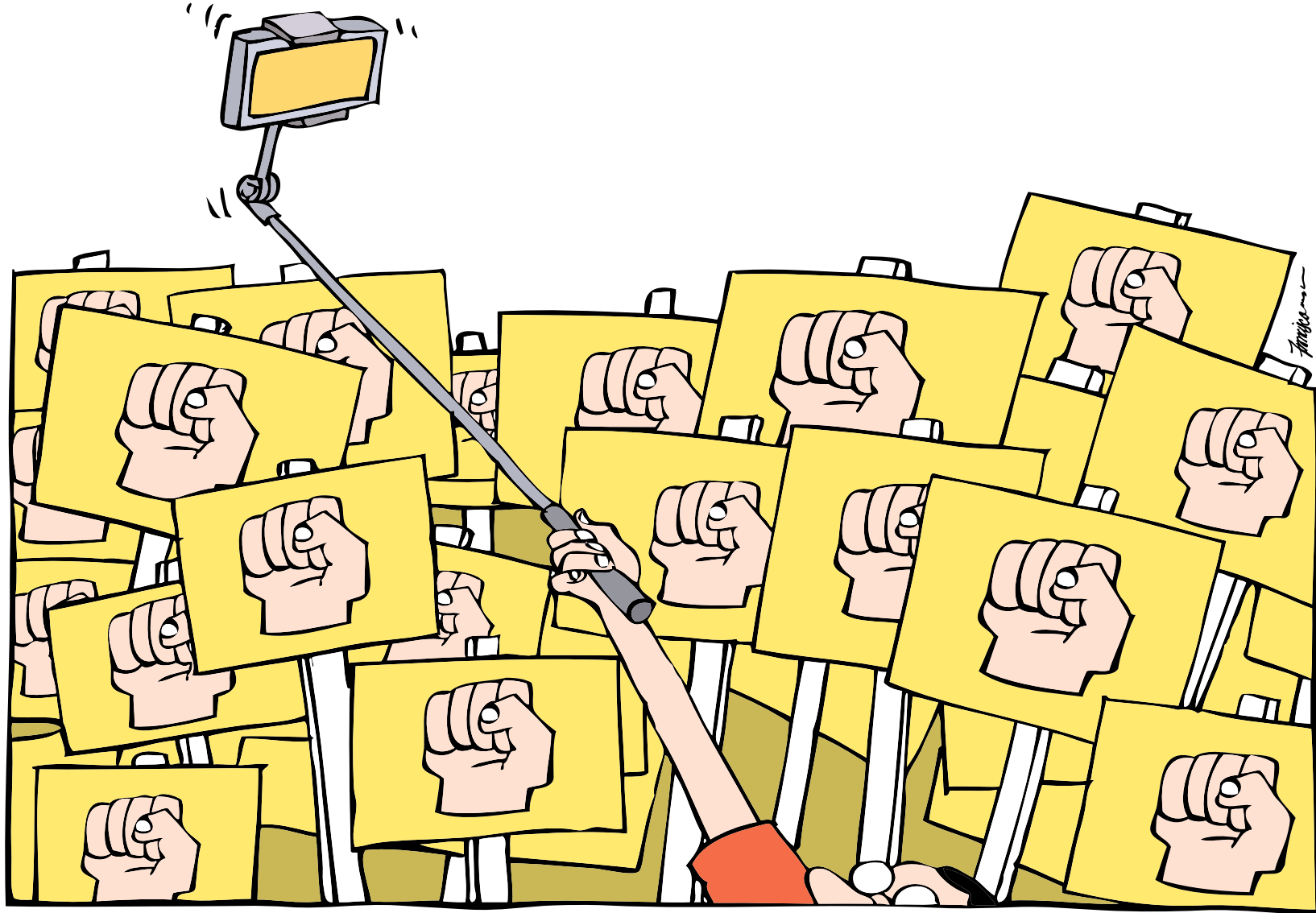
And then, there is the mistaken assumption that because politicians are geeks who spend all their time debating legislation, so are the public. But the reality is that most people take only a fleeting interest in public policy debates, and are quite happy to remain disinterested.

And that’s not because voters are stupid but, rather, as Professor James Fishkin of Stanford University, who studied the topic, puts it, because people engage in “rational ignorance”, namely they make a perfectly logical choice to allow such matters to be decided by their representatives. Asking the people to decide is not, therefore, a matter of just gathering a citizens’ assembly.

As populist and a whole array of racist, anti-establishment parties are rising to the fore throughout the Western industrialised world, the temptation to engage in broader and more frequent consultations with the public seems irresistible.

But those who wish to promote citizens’ assemblies would do well to note that although these could give political systems a new lease of life, they remain double-edged swords. For they are just as liable to destroy rather than strengthen existing political structures.

jonathan.eyal@gmail.com





# How much is your pet worth? Economists are stumped

Faye Flam

Last week I made an economic exchange that was not entirely rational. I paid people at Tufts University's small-animal hospital US\$4,000 (S\$5,400) as a deposit on an estimated US\$6,000 medical bill. This was for treating a cat that, six months ago, nobody wanted.

Nobody except me, and back then I wouldn't have been crushed if someone else had taken him and I had to choose a different cat. But nobody did.

The shelter charged me half price on the nominal adoption fee because the staff were so happy someone was finally taking away this lanky, brown-and-black 11-year-old named Pooh Bear. I may have been the only taker for Pooh Bear, but there in the hospital waiting room I could see I wasn't alone in being attached to a well-worn, somewhat decrepit animal. Others, one by one, were called to the front desk where they agreed to pay hundreds or thousands for a chance at saving a sick dog or cat – or, in one case, a parakeet.

It got me thinking about some of the science of decision-making, particularly a phenomenon called loss aversion. I felt susceptible to this, considering how far I was willing to go not to lose this cat.

Psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky discovered loss aversion in studying how people make economic decisions. It's nicely explained in Professor Kahneman's book, *Thinking, Fast And Slow*.

The idea is not just that people don't like losing. That's pretty obvious. Loss aversion exists because the fear of losing is greater than the hope of making an equivalent gain. And people will gamble to avoid a loss.

As Prof Kahneman illustrates, we usually prefer getting a sure US\$900 than a 90 per cent chance of getting US\$1,000, but we'd rather take a 90 per cent chance of losing US\$1,000 than a sure loss of US\$900.

A closely related tendency is called the endowment effect. In bartering experiments, most subjects are unwilling to sell small items – a mug or a pen – for anything close to what they originally paid. People get attached to things. I was very attached to this cat.

When I first saw him, Pooh Bear had lived in an animal shelter for six months – longer than any other cat there. He had been rejected by at least two previous owners. I took him knowing he was a senior citizen and had shown signs of heart disease. I liked him and thought he deserved a break. He was not as advertised. The people at the shelter said he was cuddly. He refused to sit on laps, or even on the same side of the couch with me. He wasn't all that fond of being petted. But as I got to know him, he was basically friendly, and he was funny.

He had expressive yellow-green eyes and sometimes used them to shoot me a look of such pure contempt that he resembled a different storybook character – not Winnie the Pooh but the Grinch.

And then one frigid January night he got sick – vomiting repeatedly, trembling, hiding under the couch. Because I'd been warned he was at high risk for heart failure, I blew US\$600 and a full night of sleep on an emergency room visit. They ruled out heart failure. But the next day he was crying out in distress.

It was Saturday and the regular vet was closed – hence the trip to the Foster Hospital for Small Animals, which is part of the Tufts University Veterinary School. They wanted to admit him, with an estimated cost of US\$3,000. I gave them my credit card. By the next day the stakes were higher. The estimate had risen to US\$6,000, because the tests revealed something blocking a bile duct, and the doctors recommended surgery.

They told me he had a 40 per cent chance of dying on the operating table. But what was the alternative? He was suffering, and this was a potential solution.

I started writing about loss aversion a year ago because a researcher at the University of Illinois named David Gal e-mailed me to say that he'd written a critique of loss aversion. He had tried to replicate some of the famous experiments and failed, and came to doubt the phenomenon existed.

While it's true that some psychological phenomena have recently been called into question when people failed to replicate experiments, loss aversion was based on several different kinds of experiments. Even if some turned out to be in error, that wouldn't necessarily invalidate the idea.

My impending loss of Pooh Bear sent me back to Prof Kahneman's book. I was struck by a short passage he wrote in warning: "All bets are off if the possible loss is potentially ruinous, or if our lifestyle is threatened."

He went on to write that the loss aversion coefficient might be infinite in some cases – that is, there are risks people won't take, no matter what the potential gain. This deserves more attention.

Many of our most momentous decisions fall into the all-bets-are-off category. In the book, Prof Kahneman describes loss aversion as an extension of our survival instinct. But sometimes in healthcare we're dealing with actual survival. Then we are no longer being predictably irrational, but acting on our perfectly reasonable fear of dying or of losing those we love.

I know, intellectually, that when Pooh Bear dies, I can get another, cuddlier cat. But I wanted this cat and I was willing to pay dearly not to lose him.

It turned out the hospital couldn't do surgery because the veterinarians deemed Pooh's heart disease too advanced for him to survive general anaesthesia. A second ultrasound showed the blockage had broken up a bit, and he recovered. The price tag ultimately was a bit over US\$2,000 – but remember that in the midst of the crisis, I had been willing to pay at least US\$6,000. I took Pooh home, and I considered myself lucky. Loss averted.

BLOOMBERG



The legal cases involving former Nissan chief executive Carlos Ghosn and Huawei chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou – as well as their reputational, economic and geopolitical ramifications – are unlikely to be the last of their kind, says the writer. PHOTOS: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

# Ghosn, Meng and the dangers of ‘arrested diplomacy’

Ramesh Thakur

On Nov 19 last year, Carlos Ghosn, the former chief executive of Nissan, was arrested at Tokyo's Haneda Airport on suspicion of under-reporting income and misusing corporate funds for personal purposes; he remains in custody.

Less than two weeks later, Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of Huawei and daughter of its founder, was arrested in transit at Vancouver's airport on charges by the United States that Huawei had violated US sanctions against Iran; out on bail, she now awaits an extradition hearing.

These two cases are technically unrelated. But both underscore an important truth: In a globalised world, domestic legal processes can have major international repercussions.

Ghosn's arrest put Japan's justice system on trial in the court of world opinion. In fact, Japan lacks many of the elements of due process found in Anglo-American jurisprudence, such as the right to have a lawyer present during questioning.

As a leading Japanese criminal defence attorney, Mr Makoto Endo, put it, Japan's criminal justice system operates on the premise of “guilty until proven guilty”.

But it may be even worse than that: a 99 per cent conviction rate (among those who are indicted) implies that Japan's prosecutors and courts could be colluding, rather than working to achieve justice. For example, prosecutors' requests for extensions of custody (up to 23 days) are rarely rejected, and bail is seldom granted. Many suspects who are released on bail are re-arrested repeatedly on fresh charges until a confession is secured.

The problems with Japan's justice system have been on public display since Ghosn's arrest. On Jan 8, using a rarely invoked constitutional provision, Ghosn made his first court appearance, at which he rejected all accusations as “meritless and unsubstantiated”.

The way he appeared in court – handcuffed, a rope around his waist and wearing plastic slippers – exacerbated what was already becoming a global public relations disaster for Japan. And yet, on Jan 10, prosecutors filed two additional charges against him. He

could now be stuck in jail for six months until the trial begins.

The silver lining is that Ghosn's case could spur a much-needed overhaul of Japan's legal system to balance better the interests of prosecutors and the rights of defendants. But that can happen only if he is acquitted.

When it comes to Meng's arrest, the international implications are more palpable: Canada has now become a battleground in the Sino-American trade-cum-technology war.

Indeed, US President Donald Trump himself politicised the case by declaring that he could intervene in the case if it would help to repair US relations with China. In other words, he made Meng a bargaining chip in the escalating bilateral conflict.

As US economist Jeffrey D. Sachs notes, the arrest of top executives for corporate malfeasance (as opposed to personal crimes like embezzlement) is rare in the US.

Huawei is China's largest international tech company and has emerged as a world leader in 5G technology. Realising that it is losing its competitive edge, the US is now scrambling to recapture it,

using its global financial clout.

So, while Ghosn's case exposed what Mr Brad Adams, the Asia director of Human Rights Watch, has called Japan's “long overlooked ‘hostage justice’ system”, Meng's arrest has been condemned by some as tantamount to “kidnapping” and “political hostage-taking”. That is not surprising. Imagine that China imposed unilateral sanctions on firms doing business in Taiwan, and then called for the arrest of their executives in third countries like Japan and South Korea.

Meng's case raises three key questions. Should international transit corridors at airports function as legal trapdoors for travellers? Why has Canada given a US law precedence over Canadian, Chinese and international law? Why should China tolerate the unilateral arrest in Canada of one of its leading citizens, who had not violated any Canadian, Chinese or international law?

China certainly is not taking Meng's arrest lying down. Like the US, China is not averse to wielding its diplomatic clout, military might and financial muscle to protect its interests. Already, the Chinese authorities have arrested two Canadians in retaliation, and earlier this month, Canadian Robert Lloyd Schellenberg was sentenced to death for a drug-trafficking conviction, after initially receiving a 15-year prison term.

Echoing Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's position on Meng's arrest, China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Hua Chunying – who had criticised the Meng case as “an abuse of judicial procedures” – rejected Canada's appeal for clemency for Schellenberg. Out of respect for the rule of law, Ms Hua said, China's government would not interfere in the judicial proceedings.

China's retaliation against Canadians is as unjustified as it is predictable. After all, it is both less costly and less risky for China to take aim at Canada than at the US. This does not, however, mean that China would not be willing to defy the US, especially if the US continues to pursue its emerging containment strategy.

China is not alone. Non-Western countries have not backed Canada on the Meng issue, highlighting a broader clash of political cultures. In fact, a growing number of non-democratic countries, including China, have lately been testing the standards of state behaviour established, enforced and arbitrated by the West.

The Canadian and Japanese governments have failed to manage effectively the reputational, economic and geopolitical ramifications of the Meng and Ghosn cases, which, given the interconnectedness of today's world, are unlikely to be the last of their kind.

To ensure that such cases do not escalate into potentially destabilising international incidents, creative diplomacy – focused on finding an appropriate balance between legal values and geopolitical interests – will be vital.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

• Ramesh Thakur is emeritus professor at the Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University, and a former United Nations assistant secretary-general.

# Why Facebook can't resist integrating WhatsApp

Shira Ovide

Facebook's “family” of apps is about to get even closer.

The New York Times reported last Friday that Facebook is planning to more closely integrate the apps it owns, including its Messenger and WhatsApp instant chat services, as well as photo-and-video-focused Instagram.

The decision is both an inevitable end to independence for properties that Facebook acquired and initially left largely alone, and a barrier against calls to split the company apart to limit its power.

Essentially, Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp are set to move to a common technology foundation. The firm will keep them as separate apps. This makes all the sense in the world, of course, even if it apparently has been controversial internally, and may make some Facebook users uncomfortable.

Facebook's advertising system already spans across the company's various services. McDonald's, for example, can allocate a pool of advertising money to Facebook, and the tech firm's computerised system chooses to show some Big Mac commercials on Instagram and others on the main Facebook

social network.

But surely a move to a single Facebook tech foundation will make it even easier for the social media giant to gather more data on people as they surf around all the firm's apps, and pinpoint ads to them.

This effort won't be simple. Facebook requires people to use their real names in their social network profiles, but Instagram doesn't. Over at WhatsApp, people sign up using their phone numbers rather than names.

It isn't trivial to connect a single person and her Facebook account to an Instagram profile under a pseudonym, and a WhatsApp account with just a phone number.

But unifying people's identities online and in the real world is a big help to Facebook's advertising business at a time when it needs a lift. Facebook will need to squeeze more revenue from more places now that the company's advertising growth is slowing, in part because the Facebook social network has hit a saturation point in the developed countries that generate the majority of the company's revenue. That means Facebook will have to try harder to turn Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp into foundations of its revenue growth. Integrating the apps' technology goes a step towards achieving this.

The ancillary benefit – or harm,

depending on your point of view – is the closer Facebook ties together what its chief Mark Zuckerberg calls its family of apps, the harder it gets to break up the company.

Advocacy groups critical of Facebook have asked US regulators to unwind the purchases of Instagram and WhatsApp over what those groups say are violations of consumer privacy rules. Other critics have said splitting up Facebook's family is a way to blunt the company's power by limiting its reach into people's lives, and giving it less information about people's online and offline activities.

The Facebook break-up was always going to be a long shot. If Facebook binds its apps more closely together, the long shot moves to a practical impossibility.

That doesn't mean Facebook will be free from government scrutiny. European regulators could and should ask Facebook tough questions if it unifies its empire of apps. The company already got in trouble for providing misleading information to European regulators as they reviewed Facebook's more than US\$17 billion (S\$23 billion) purchase of WhatsApp in 2014.

Facebook initially told European Union officials that it wasn't possible to meld WhatsApp data with Facebook's own stockpile of

digital information. It turned out that wasn't true and Facebook has since started to combine user data. One of WhatsApp's founders recently told Forbes he believed Facebook caused him to tell European regulators something that wasn't true. (Facebook has said it made unintentional errors in a filing to the EU related to the WhatsApp purchase.)

If there were any doubts before, this app integration news should signal that the autonomy which Instagram and particularly WhatsApp enjoyed under Facebook's roof is now over.

Acquiring companies tend to promise they'll leave a purchased asset alone, but it never lasts – for mostly good reason. Facebook didn't splurge billions of dollars on Instagram, WhatsApp and its Oculus virtual reality company to leave them alone forever.

The corporate imperative is to grow, and Facebook now needs its disparate empire to pull together to achieve its mission. There will be grumbling about Facebook unifying its apps. But it was an obvious decision by a company that now has to try much harder to continue to lure more people and advertisers to its digital empire.

BLOOMBERG

• Shira Ovide is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering technology.



# The real wall isn't at the border

Technology is transforming boundaries around countries and erecting them around individuals

Atossa Araxia Abrahamian

President Donald Trump wants US\$5.7 billion (S\$7.7 billion) to build a wall at the southern border of the United States. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi thinks a wall is “immoral”. The fight over these slats or barriers or bricks shut down the government for more than a month and could do so again if Mr Trump isn't satisfied with the way negotiations unfold during the next three weeks.

But let's be clear: This is a disagreement about symbolism, not policy. Liberals object less to aggressive border security than to the wall's xenophobic imagery, while the administration openly revels in its political incorrectness. And when this particular episode is over, we'll still have been fighting about the wrong thing.

It's true that immigrants will keep trying to cross into the US and that global migration will almost certainly increase in the coming years as climate change makes parts of the planet uninhabitable.

But technology and globalisation are complicating the idea of what a border is and where it stands.

Not long from now, it won't make sense to think of the border as a line, a wall or even any kind of imposing vertical structure. Tearing down, or refusing to fund, border walls won't get anyone very far in the broader pursuit of global justice.

The borders of the future won't be as easy to spot, build or demolish as the wall that Mr Trump is proposing. That is because they aren't just going up around countries – they're going up around us.

In *The Jungle* – a play about a refugee camp in Calais, France – a Kurdish smuggler named Ali explains that his profession is not responsible for the large numbers of migrants making the dangerous journeys to Europe by sea. “Once, I was the only way a man could ever dream of arriving on your shore,” the smuggler says. But today, migrants can plan out the journeys



A protester with an anti-wall sign during a march by members of Border Network for Human Rights in El Paso, Texas, on Saturday. Today, relatively few land borders exist to physically fend off a neighbouring power, says the writer. Modern borders exist to control something else: the movement of people. PHOTO: REUTERS

using their phones.

“It is not about this border. It's the border in here,” Ali says, pointing to his head – “and that is gone, now.”

Mr Trump is obsessed with his border wall because technology has freed us from the walls in our heads. For people with means and passports, it's easy to plot exotic itineraries in a flash and book flights with just a glance at a screen. Social feeds are an endless stream of old faces in new places: a carefree colleague feeding elephants in Thailand; a smug college classmate on a “babymoon” in Tahiti; a friend's parents enjoying retirement in New Zealand.

Likewise, a young person in Sanaa, Yemen, or Guatemala City might see a sister in Toronto, a neighbour in Phoenix, an aunt in London or a teacher in Berlin, and think that he, too, could start anew. Foreign places are real. Another country is possible.

If you zoom out enough in Google Earth, you'll see the lines between nations begin to disappear. Eventually, you'll be left staring at a unified blue planet. You might even experience a hint of what astronauts have called the “overview effect”: the sense that we are all on “Spaceship Earth”, together.

“From space I saw Earth – indescribably beautiful with the scars of national boundaries gone,” Syrian astronaut Muhammed Faris recalled after his 1987 mission to space. In 2012, he fled war-torn Syria for Turkey.

One's freedom of movement used to be largely determined by one's citizenship, national origin and finances. That's still the case – but increasingly, people are being categorised not just by the colour of their passports or their ability to pay for tickets, but also by where they've been and what they've said in the past.

This is what is happening on that

front already: A 2017 American executive order barred people from seven countries, including five with Muslim majorities, from entering the US. An older rule put in place during the Obama administration compelled anyone who'd even just visited seven blacklisted nations to obtain additional clearance before travelling to the US.

Even as the Trump administration's policy has met with legal challenges, it means that the barrier to entering the US, for many, begins with their data and passport stamps, far away from the country.

The Trump administration would also like to make it harder for immigrants who have received public assistance to obtain citizenship or permanent residence by redefining what it means to be a “public charge”. If the administration succeeds, it will have moved the border into immigrants' living rooms, schools and hospital beds.

The walls of the future go beyond one administration's policies, though. They are growing all around us, being built by global technology companies that allow for constant surveillance, data harvesting and the alarming collection of biometric information.

In 2017, the US announced it would be storing the social media profiles of immigrants in their permanent file, ostensibly to prevent Twitter-happy terrorists from slipping in. For years, Customs and Border Protection agents have asked travellers about their social media, too.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation has said these practices can “chill and deter the free speech and association of immigrants to the United States, as well as the US persons who communicate with them”. In other words, it's no longer enough to have been born in the right place, at the right time, to the right parents. The trail of bread

crumbs you leave could limit your movements.

It's possible to get a glimpse of where a digital border might lead from China. Look at its continuing experiment with social credit scoring, where a slip of the tongue or an unpaid debt could one day jeopardise someone's ability to board a train or apply for a job. When your keystrokes and text messages become embedded in your legal identity, you create a wall around yourself without meaning to.

Berkeley political theorist Wendy Brown diagnoses the tendency to throw up walls as a classic symptom of a nation-state's looming impotence in the face of globalisation – the flashy sports car of what she calls a “waning sovereignty”.

In a recent interview, she said that walls fulfil a desire for greater sovereign control in times when the concept of “bounded territory itself is in crisis”. They are signifiers of a “loss of a national ‘we’ and national control – all the things we've seen erupt in a huge way”.

Walls are a response to deep existential anxiety, and even if the walls come down, or fail to be built in brick and stone, the world will guarantee us little in the way of freedom, fairness or equality.

It makes more sense to think of modern borders as overlapping and concentric circles that change size, shape and texture depending on who – or what – is trying to pass through.

It's far too easy to imagine a situation where our freedom of movement still depends entirely on what has happened to us in the past and what kind of information we're willing to give up in return.

Consider the expedited screening process of the Global Entry Programme for travelling to the US. It's a shortcut – reserved for people who can get it – that doesn't do away with borders. It just makes them easier to cross, and therefore less visible.

That serves the modern nation-state very well. Because in the end, what are borders supposed to protect us from? The answer used to be other states, empires or sovereigns. But today, relatively few land borders exist to physically fend off a neighbouring power, and countries even cooperate to police the borders they share. Modern borders exist to control something else: the movement of people. They control us. Those are the walls we should be fighting over. NYTIMES

• Atossa Araxia Abrahamian is the author of *The Cosmopolites: The Coming Of The Global Citizen*.

## A Penang Hokkien ‘banana’ feeling lost at home

Wong Chun Wai

Last week, I returned to my home town, Penang, to celebrate Chinese New Year. The family reunion meal with my father (who turns 94 this year) and (87-year-old) mother is an annual event I always look forward to.

I have made it a point to host these pre-CNY meals because, for the last few years, I have avoided being in Penang during the first two days of the actual celebrations. That's when Penang island's roads get choked up and traffic comes to a complete standstill, the city desperately dealing with the homecoming of Penangites and tourists.

It's worse for a “banana” like me – a term to denote a person of Chinese origin who can't speak or write Chinese and, instead, identifies more with Western culture. The term is derived from the fruit, which is “yellow on the outside, white on the inside”.

Those like me are regarded as a disgrace to the Mandarin-speaking community because they can't read or write Chinese or speak Mandarin.

My decade of education was at St Xavier's Institution, a Catholic establishment and, despite the religious background of the premier school, it had a liberal and open-minded culture that moulded most of its students. The multi-ethnic mix of the school's population also meant we had real friends from all races, developed and tested over a decade.

Fast forward to 2019. Just like *The Last Of The Mohicans* – the James Fenimore Cooper historical novel

realised in the 1992 movie about the last members of the dying Native American tribe, the Mohicans – it dawned on me last week that I could well be among the Last Of The Bananas in Malaysia.

At the Air Itam wet market, I asked for the price of the thee kuih, or kuih bakul, in Hokkien and the stallholder, in turn, replied: “Oh, ni yao (you want) nian gao.” Another trader was loudly hawking hongbao packets which in previous times would be referred to as “ang pow long” (red packets), but this time I was hearing “hongbao feng”. At a coffee shop, it was no longer “kopi” but “ka fei” now.

If there's one clear feature that separates Penangites from the rest of the ethnic Chinese in Malaysia, it has always been the melodious Hokkien, with its rich sprinkling of Malay words that reveals its Nonya-baba linguistic roots.

Penangites – at least from the older generation – are fiercely proud of their Hokkien, as it completely differs from the one spoken in Singapore, Taiwan or Xiamen in China, and even that in Melaka or Johor. Call us smug, snooty or parochial but we sometimes dismiss the Hokkien spoken elsewhere as somewhat crass and unrefined.

Only the Hokkien spoken by the Chinese in Medan closely mirrors Penang Hokkien, presumably because of the proximity between the island and the Indonesian city.

Whether rightly or wrongly, or plainly out of ignorance, Penangites feel the sing-song delivery is easier on the ears.

Words such as balai (police station), balu (just now), bangku (stool), batu (stone), cilaka/celaka

**If there's one clear feature that separates Penangites from the rest of the ethnic Chinese in Malaysia, it has always been the melodious Hokkien, with its rich sprinkling of Malay words that reveals its Nonya-baba linguistic roots. Penangites – at least from the older generation – are fiercely proud of their Hokkien, as it completely differs from the one spoken in Singapore, Taiwan or Xiamen in China, and even that in Melaka or Johor.**

(damn it) and campur (to mix) are an integral part of the Penang Hokkien dialect.

If the person is not from Penang, then he is likely from Kedah, Perlis or Taiping in Perak, to be able to converse in the northern-accented Hokkien. Which brings me to my point: As the daily use of the dialect is rapidly being replaced by Mandarin, I am feeling the impact the most. It is worse for the “bananas” who are feeling lost and out of place – in their home town.

It doesn't help that many of the present Penang state and federal leaders aren't from Penang, having been born and raised in either Melaka, Johor or Selangor. The Penang Monthly bulletin, in its May 2017 issue, dramatically headlined

the situation: “Penang Hokkien on life support”.

In an interview with the publication, Penang Hokkien Language Association secretary Ooi Kee How lamented that “our creativity, our cultural identity, will decline”.

But the wide use of Mandarin and the decline of the dialects are not just endemic to Penang. Cantonese is spoken less in the Klang Valley, too, and is suffering the same sad fate as northern Hokkien. The random stranger who calls up, irritatingly “inviting” us to take up a loan, having been “specially selected”, speaks to me in Mandarin because it's assumed I can speak the language since I have a Chinese name. Likewise, the sales staff who stop us at the shopping mall also speak to me in Mandarin, likely led by the same deduction.

So, as a “banana” who thinks and dreams in English, I am starting to suffer from anxiety. I am embarrassed by my inability to communicate in an important language – with huge economic value – and worse, the national language of my ancestral country.

At the rate the Chinese language is being used, even by non-Chinese, I fear that I will be regarded as illiterate in future. “Bananas” in the past ridiculed and mocked the Chinese-educated for not being able to speak English sufficiently, or roll their tongues well enough to produce the “r” sound, but now it looks like the tables have turned on the “bananas” instead.

A whole generation of Malaysian Chinese has been educated in Chinese schools, at least at the primary level. It has been widely reported, from various surveys,

that up to 90 per cent of Chinese parents send their children to Chinese primary schools, and the rest to national medium schools. This is unlike the experience of the older generation of Penangites like me, now in their 50s, who attended schools using English as a medium of instruction. In the absence of Mandarin, we spoke mainly Hokkien and English, but people in their 30s and 40s are more comfortable conversing in Mandarin, and certainly not English.

Then there is the huge impact of Chinese TV shows, especially on Astro. They are entirely in Mandarin – with shows from mainland China and Taiwan – and Hokkien, which is spoken in a manner closer to that used in Melaka, Johor and Singapore.

It's no surprise that the sales staff at malls also expect the Chinese community to speak Mandarin and, understandably, they will begin the conversation in Mandarin – because you are expected to know the language.

There is also the impact of China as the new economic powerhouse of Asia, if not the world. Mandarin has become the dominant language with economic value, and certainly prestige. That's how it is now, but this may well come at the expense of a rich heritage.

The harsh reality is that the unique “sing-song” style of Penang Hokkien might no longer be heard decades from now if this frightening trend continues. Even worse, what's certain is that the “bananas” will be history very soon.

Well, what can I say, except to wish you “xin nian kuai le” (happy new year) and “gong xi fa cai” (may you attain greater wealth) this festive season!

THE STAR/ASIA NEWS NETWORK

• Wong Chun Wai is The Star's managing director/chief executive officer.



# BIG PICTURE



WEATHER

Windy with passing showers in the afternoon.  
**High** 33 deg C **Low** 24 deg C  
**24-hr PSI as of 5pm yesterday:** 43 to 53 (Moderate)



PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

## Aceh's vibrant new attraction

A newly opened park in the district of Panga in Indonesia's Aceh province has been drawing visitors, thanks to its vibrant sea of red and yellow celosia flowers.

The designers of the 1ha park wanted it to resemble the flower

gardens seen in countries such as the Netherlands and Italy. Visitors pay 10,000 rupiah (\$\$1) each to enter the park and they have been flooding social media sites with pictures of the brightly coloured blooms.

Ms Fajri Rahmawati told Indonesian news site Tagar News that she first read about the park online and was impressed with its beauty. The celosia flower is often known as cockscomb because of its resemblance to a chicken's crest.



Jointly presented by  
**SMU Institute of Innovation & Entrepreneurship and SMU Academy**

**A Brand New Advanced Certificate in Entrepreneurship (F&B) starting in March 2019**

Every entrepreneur can benefit from continuing education, whether you are just starting out and handling multiple roles within your organisation or an experienced business owner. Specially designed for participants from the F&B industry, this certification programme will prepare you to create economic and social value in your business. Built from 6 modules, this programme allows you the opportunity to learn from experienced entrepreneurs in the F&B industry who will help you develop skillsets in recognising opportunities, leveraging resources and understanding the context of your work with innovative thinking.

**Advanced Certificate in Entrepreneurship (F&B)** (visit <https://smu.sg/advcertFnB> for more details.)

Modules	Duration	Course Dates
Module 1: Identifying & Evaluating Market Opportunities	2 full Saturdays	9 & 16 Mar 2019
Module 2: Validation, Market Testing & Risk Management	2 full Saturdays	23 & 30 Mar 2019
Module 3: Financial Modelling & Management	2 full Saturdays	6 & 13 Apr 2019
Module 4: Marketing & Branding	2 full Saturdays	20 & 27 Apr 2019
Module 5: Stakeholder Management: Partners & People	2 full Saturdays	4 & 11 May 2019
Module 6: Operations & How to Get Started	2 full Saturdays	18 & 25 May 2019

**Programme Director & Lead Trainer**  
Michel Lu, Founder & Executive Chairman, Revolver Asia

**Other Trainers**  
Bernard Lim (Ex-CEO, LifeBrands), Thio Gwan Choon (Ex-CFO, Thai Express), Faye Sit (Co-founder, Hook Coffee), Jason Tan (General Manager, Global Kitchens), Malcolm Chao (Vice-President, Brotzeit International), Bing Blokbergen-Leow (Director, GastroSense), Daniel Ong (Founder, 12 Cupcakes, Rookery & Mischief) and KF Seetoh (Founder, Makansutra).

Course Fees (All fees quoted are inclusive of GST.)

Full programme fee per participant	SS\$10,272
For Singapore Citizens/ Singapore Permanent Residents	SS\$3,081.60
For Singapore Citizens aged 40 & above	SS\$1,161.60
For Singapore Citizens aged 35 & above (13 years & above for persons with disabilities) earning a monthly income of not more than SS\$2,000	SS\$681.60
For SMEs supporting their employees who are Singapore Citizens/ Singapore Permanent Residents	SS\$1,161.60

For enquiries, please contact Mr Tan Shuo Yan at 6828 5164 or email [shuo.yantan@smu.edu.sg](mailto:shuo.yantan@smu.edu.sg).



People's Association

## I'VE GOT ALL THE RIGHT MOVES

**onePArt TRAINER. onePArt PASSION.**

If you have what it takes to bond the community, you will find fulfilment as a Trainer with the People's Association (PA). Apply now as a PA Trainer to share your passion and knowledge at our Community Centres/Clubs and Residents' Committee Centres!

Make the move now at [www.pa.gov.sg](http://www.pa.gov.sg)

**We are looking for Trainers in all fields, especially these:**

- Abseiling/ Sport Climbing
- Ball Games
- Camp Operators
- Ceramic Art
- Digital Marketing
- Dragon Boating
- Dressmaking and Fashion
- E-commerce Applications
- Emotional Intelligence
- Financial Literacy for Kids
- Gourmet Cooking and Baking
- Hair Styling
- Home Design/ Decoration
- Kayaking
- Malay Musical Instruments
- Negotiation Skills
- Painting and Calligraphy
- Sailing
- Wellness and Traditional Chinese Medicine



[www.pa.gov.sg](http://www.pa.gov.sg)

For more information, email: [pa\\_lifeskills\\_lifestyle@pa.gov.sg](mailto:pa_lifeskills_lifestyle@pa.gov.sg)



# BUSINESS

## \$323m

RECORD SUM PAID BY BILLIONAIRE FOR NEW YORK PENTHOUSE C2

Mr Ong Bee Chip, managing director of Golden Bridge Foods and its sister brand Ellaziq, which makes halal food products, says reduced tariffs will allow his items, ranging from halal chicken floss to other products like dried Chinese sausage, to be more affordable when exported to the EU.

ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN



## 84%

Percentage of Singapore exports that will enter the EU duty-free when the European Union-Singapore FTA is implemented.

has increased significantly but not many factories do minority business. It's a potentially big market."

Like food companies, precision engineering company Patec, which has facilities in Hungary, expects savings to go up to €300,000 (\$463,000) – about 2 per cent of its EU revenue. About 35 per cent of its business is EU-based and it handles about €18 million worth of EU-related trade.

"The ratification of the FTA, in this period of radical protectionism, serves to underscore the importance and faith that Singapore and the EU share for free trade," said Mr Kelvin Wee, deputy chief executive of Patec, which supplies metal components to automotive companies like Bosch.

Others, like logistics company DPEX Worldwide Express, hope to do more business with small and medium-sized enterprises in Europe that want to sell to Asia.

"Major British and German retailers are extremely loyal to their local service providers and it is difficult for an Asian service provider to break the chain (into the European market)," said Mr Donald Tay, chief executive of DPEX.

"Ironically, these local service providers turn to us for service into Asia," he added.

Its target is to have 25 per cent of its turnover from Europe.

Meanwhile, bigger players like developer CapitalLand look forward to an "expected uptick in the flow of investment, business travellers and expatriates in both markets", said Mr Gerald Yong, chief executive of CapitalLand International.

"This will, in turn, generate greater demand for our lodging and commercial properties," he added. "We can also look forward to a greater competitive edge and be treated equally with EU companies when bidding for contracts in that region."

He said his company will also deepen its presence in European "gateway" cities such as Berlin, Frankfurt and Paris.

byseow@sph.com.sg

# Local firms looking forward to approval of EU-S'pore FTA

## Reduced tariffs will benefit food manufacturers here, among others

**Seow Bei Yi**  
Business Correspondent

A wider range of halal food products made in Singapore could find their way to stores in Europe for its growing Muslim population, should the upcoming European

Union-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (FTA) be approved.

Ratification of the trade pact early this year by the European Parliament is on the cards and businesses are looking ahead for new opportunities.

The potential agreement is good news for food manufacturers here,

said Mr Ong Bee Chip, managing director of Golden Bridge Foods and its sister brand Ellaziq, which makes halal food products.

This is because reduced tariffs will allow his products, ranging from halal chicken floss to other items like lap cheong (dried Chinese sausage), to be more afford-

able when exported to the EU, he said, adding that he expects exports to rise by four to five times.

His factories received certification to export to Europe in the last four to six years and currently export about 10 to 12 tonnes of food products to Europe a year, he said.

The processed food product industry, with pharmaceuticals and chemicals, is particularly well placed to benefit as 84 per cent of

Singapore exports will enter the EU duty-free when the FTA is implemented.

With the FTA, materials from Asean countries will be deemed as originating from Singapore when incorporated into certain products. This will qualify the products for preferential tariff treatment.

Mr Ong hopes to expand into more markets if the FTA is approved. "The number of Muslims

## No Fed hike this week but don't rule out more in 2019, say analysts

WASHINGTON • The US Federal Reserve will hold its fire this week, leaving interest rates untouched and letting markets calm down after a tumultuous end to 2018.

Coming off Wall Street's worst December since the Great Depression and amid mounting fears over the global economy, Fed policymakers are now unanimously hammering a single message: They will be "patient" before pulling the trigger again.

Fed chairman Jerome Powell is likely to stick to that script when he announces the latest monetary policy decision on Wednesday.

Futures markets are wagering the central bank will actually stand pat for all of this year, with a growing share betting the Fed could even begin cutting interest rates as soon as next December.

Maybe they should think again.

While a cold wind blew at the end of last year, gathering conditions suggest the Fed could feel compelled to raise the key lending rate as soon as spring, economists said.

"I think the danger here is that markets are now expecting nothing," said economist Ian Shepherdson of Pantheon Macroeconomics. "The Fed could swing around on a dime once it becomes clear that the things that have scared them are no longer very scary."



The US Federal Reserve building in Washington. While futures markets are betting on the Fed standing pat this year, economists suggest the key lending rate could be raised as soon as spring. PHOTO: REUTERS

The month-long partial shutdown of the federal government – the longest in history – was resolved with a provision agreement announced last Friday between the White House and Congress.

Had the closure, which idled 800,000 federal workers, continued until March, it could have choked first-quarter growth to zero, chief White House economist Kevin Hassett said last week.

The Fed also is flying blind to some extent because the shutdown halted the flow of economic data from the Commerce Department. It could get some key reports this week as the government reopens.

While December saw blockbuster job creation and tame inflation, it had a batch of very gloomy numbers too. Amid President Donald Trump's trade war with China, the US manufacturing industry

could be starting to crumble, with the sector seeing its biggest one-month drop in December since the global financial crisis. Meanwhile, consumer sentiment – which can help predict spending by ordinary Americans – hit a two-year low.

Add to this the contraction of the German and Japanese economies, and the slowest Chinese growth in almost three decades, not to mention Wall Street's nightmarish ride last month, and investor dyspepsia becomes easy to understand.

But fears of a US recession this year may be overdone, said Ms Kathy Bostjancic, chief US financial market economist at Oxford Economics, which expects the Fed to raise rates twice this year, with the first in May.

"We don't think they are done tightening this cycle," she said. "The Fed needs to take some time

to assess the landscape."

Dr Shepherdson agreed, warning against counting on no Fed moves this year. He said business investment is likely to be sluggish this year but the labour market should tighten as unemployment continues to fall, driving up wages.

That likely would pressure inflation while other potential dangers to the economy will either be resolved or prove less threatening than they seemed.

The potential risks include the trade war with China and its slowing economy, Brexit, the US housing market slump, rising interest rates, high corporate debt and a possible recession in manufacturing.

Said Dr Shepherdson: "It's something of a mess in the first few months of the year. But lift up your eyes and look to the horizon and not to the ground."

## OCBC's new credit scheme targets 'serial entrepreneurs'

**Aw Cheng Wei**

OCBC Bank is introducing a new credit scheme that targets entrepreneurs running more than one business, giving them access to loans "a few months before incorporation" of the new venture.

The bank said the market is sizeable, citing figures that show one in three new businesses incorporated in Singapore between 2015 and 2017 belongs to an entrepreneur already running a business.

The launch of the Serial Entrepreneur credit scheme follows a 12-month pilot programme that started in October 2017, where more than \$100 million in business loans were approved, the bank said in a statement.

OCBC said it will take a "comprehensive view of the entrepreneur's experience, business track record and overall business strategy across his or her group of companies".

The approach improves on the current industry model, which evaluates each business on "a stand-alone basis based on their track record and financial credibility", OCBC said. It is "difficult for start-ups less than two years old to obtain financing, even if the founder has operating businesses and a proven track record", it added.

Ms Joyce Tee, group head of SME Banking at competitor DBS Bank, said over half of the bank's small

and medium-sized enterprise customers, who have more than one business, "already have credit facilities with us and are also tapped into our social networks across Asia that provide business and technology networking services".

Mr Mervyn Koh, United Overseas Bank's country head of business banking Singapore, said the bank has developed a credit underwriting engine that uses data analytics to assess new businesses' credit ratings more accurately as they may not have the "necessary credit history".

It uses the bank's existing sources of information and "teams that with new pools of data... (including) the company's day-to-day operations".

"As part of the (loan) evaluation process, the bank also considers the business' viability and factors such as whether it has a pipeline of secured projects," he added.

awcw@sph.com.sg

**OCBC said it will take a "comprehensive view of the entrepreneur's experience, business track record and overall business strategy across his or her group of companies".**



# Even in jaded New York, a \$323m penthouse turns heads

Tycoon Kenneth Griffin’s pricey purchase is most expensive residential sale in US history

NEW YORK • In Manhattan, where multimillion-dollar real estate sales are routine, a hedge fund tycoon has managed to set a new standard for conspicuous consumption by paying a fortune for an unfinished piece of property in the sky.

Billionaire Kenneth Griffin spent US\$238 million (\$323 million) for a penthouse at 220 Central Park South that is still under construction, making it the most expensive residential sale in US history.

What’s more, in a New York tale that is not entirely uncommon, the 79-storey tower housing Mr Griffin’s penthouse is being built after the landlord evicted dozens of middle-class tenants from their rent-stabilised apartments in a fairly modest 20-floor building.

With a net worth estimated at

US\$10 billion, Mr Griffin, founder and chief executive of investment firm Citadel, is among the richest people in the world. And in recent years, he has become increasingly willing to flaunt his wealth, spending lavishly on modern art, philanthropy and trophy real estate, even as income inequality is roiling the national political debate.

Twice divorced, Mr Griffin has three children and is primarily based in Chicago, where Citadel is headquartered. Through a spokesman, Mr Griffin declined to comment for this story.

He is a globe-trotting home buyer, leaving a trail of his pricey purchases, from a US\$60 million penthouse in Miami to a US\$122 million mansion in London.

All told, according to a person fa-



The 220 Central Park South tower in Manhattan, where tycoon Kenneth Griffin paid US\$238 million for a penthouse. His other property buys include a US\$60 million penthouse in Miami and a US\$122 million mansion in London. PHOTO: NYTIMES

miliar with Mr Griffin’s spending, he has spent approximately US\$700 million on real estate and nearly as much on art.

But he has given away about US\$700 million, according to the person familiar with his finances.

He is on the board of the Whitney Museum of American Art. He donated US\$40 million to the Museum of Modern Art. Mr Griffin and

his former wife donated US\$19 million to the Art Institute of Chicago. And at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, he donated US\$16.5 million to fund the purchase of the largest dinosaur ever discovered.

Mr Griffin has also donated huge sums to educational institutions. In 2014 he gave US\$150 million to Harvard University, the largest gift

in the school’s history. In 2017 his charity said it would donate US\$125 million to the University of Chicago.

Fellow financiers said Mr Griffin should be applauded for his philanthropy, rather than vilified for his spending.

Mr John Rogers Jr, chief executive of Ariel Investments, who serves on the University of Chicago

board with Mr Griffin, said: “The key thing is that he’s decided to be generous now. Ken is a role model for the next generation of hedge fund managers.”

Mr Griffin has cited his maternal grandparents as inspiration for his philanthropy. They ran a fuel oil business in Illinois, and when some customers could not pay their bills during the winter, his grandparents would extend them credit.

The Harvard graduate made his fortune through finance. As a sophomore in 1987, Mr Griffin began trading out of his dorm room using a fax machine, a personal computer and the phone. Just three years later, he founded Citadel. The firm grew rapidly, and today Citadel, which is privately held, manages some US\$28 billion, trading stocks, fixed income, commodities and more.

Mr Griffin has proved adept at making a profit even during market turbulence. Last year, Citadel’s flagship fund was up 9.1 per cent, despite a difficult end of the year for most markets. In the hedge fund industry, such performance is extremely lucrative. In 2017 alone, Mr Griffin earned some US\$1.4 billion, more than any other hedge fund manager, according to Institutional Investor’s Alpha magazine.

Wall Street’s compensations have made New York look like a Monopoly board come to life; there are so many ultra-luxury residential buildings along the southern edge of Central Park that it has been nicknamed “Billionaire’s Row”.

That Mr Griffin is spending so freely when populist movements are gaining momentum around the globe struck some critics as especially tone deaf.

“The plutocrats continue brazenly flaunting the excesses that have enraged much of humanity,” said Mr Anand Giridharadas, author of Winners Take All, and a critic of wealthy philanthropists. “They are displaying very little awareness of the moment that we are in.” NYTIMES

## Commentary

# ‘3Ls’ approach helps investors plan for long-term financial goals



Tan Min Lan

For The Straits Times

It’s that time of the year when everyone makes resolutions.

Many of us look to improve our well-being, yet too often we start out with big dreams and great intentions only to revert to old (and potentially bad) habits before long.

It’s no different for investors. Even the most unflappable people often let their hearts rule their heads during turbulent times.

So UBS has devised a wealth management approach – Liquidity, Longevity or the “3Ls” – to help investors navigate a more volatile investment landscape this year. How can this new year’s resolution help your wealth?

The “3Ls” help investors to plan for their long-term financial goals. The framework asks you to look at your financial objectives, group them into three buckets and create a dedicated investment strategy for each one.

The first bucket, a Liquidity strategy, aims to fund your

expenses and service your debts over the next two to five years. Such a short investment timeframe means this part of your wealth should be held in assets whose value is less sensitive to market swings – examples include cash or highly rated bonds.

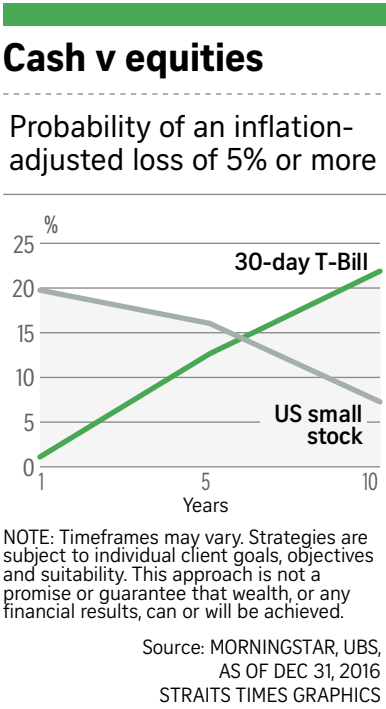
The second bucket, a Longevity strategy, looks to fund your financial goals following your retirement.

Many investors use pensions or retirement savings vehicles in their Longevity strategy. But the “3Ls” framework also considers other personal needs for later life, such as paying off your mortgage, disability insurance and long-term healthcare needs.

The third bucket, a Legacy strategy, invests any surplus funds once you have met your own needs. It’s designed to help improve the lives of others beyond your lifetime – whether supporting your children or grandchildren financially or improving the outlook for our planet and its inhabitants through sustainable giving or investing.

**A DISCIPLINED INVESTMENT PLAN**

Using the “3Ls” framework to create a disciplined investment plan can help investors navigate a more challenging environment in the year ahead and still gain from the expected rise in global equity markets that we forecast for this year.



First, the “3Ls” framework can help investors to stick to their plans and avoid emotional biases. A study by business school professors Brad Barber and Terrance Odean found that households with the highest portfolio turnover (frequent trading in choppy markets, for example) underperformed low-turnover investors by almost 7 per cent a year.

Using a Liquidity strategy of lower-volatility assets to fund

expenses over the next two to five years can help investors avoid selling assets in turbulent times and locking in poor performance.

Second, it allows investors to reframe risk in terms that really matter to them. Investors fear swings in asset prices because they worry they may fail to reach goals such as securing a comfortable retirement or funding their children’s college fees.

The “3Ls” framework speaks to investors’ personal ambitions by framing risk with a probability of success and a surplus or a deficit – will you have enough money to meet your goal or are you set to fall short?

Let’s take a concrete example of retirement planning. A 2018 UBS survey found that 59 per cent of participants in Hong Kong and 46 per cent in Singapore expect to live to 100.

Planning for a multi-decade retirement requires investors to think about risk differently.

In turbulent markets, the appeal of cash seems greater as it holds value compared to gyrating stock prices. Yet, United States data over nearly a century shows that equities beat cash in terms of delivering inflation-adjusted returns (see chart).

And while past performance cannot predict future returns, our analysis shows that US equity investors have always experienced positive inflation-adjusted returns

over 20-year investment periods.

**PUTTING ‘3LS’ INTO PRACTICE**

Every investor’s circumstances are unique. But there are a few universal principles:

**Create your own balance sheet**

List all your assets and liabilities for both pre- and post-retirement periods. These need not be numbers in a bank account or heirlooms you can touch.

Working-age investors may find their greatest asset is their human capital, making it important to consider education costs as a way to boost wealth, or disability insurance in the worst case of your career being cut short.

**Meet near-term liabilities with a Liquidity strategy**

Consider funding the next two to five years of spending via a portfolio of cash or highly rated debt instruments.

Working-age investors may fund this out of labour earnings, while retirees could use pension or annuity income.

This strategy’s role as a stable source of income can allow investors to bear market risk elsewhere, even in volatile market conditions.

**Regularly rebalance across strategies**

With near-term expenses covered

by the Liquidity bucket, investors can focus on growing their retirement funds (Longevity strategy) through a portfolio diversified across assets and geographies.

Meanwhile, surplus funds invested in a Legacy portfolio can be invested in longer-term assets with the greatest growth potential as the goals to be funded are multi-generational.

If unexpected market conditions reduce the likelihood of you having enough to fund your preferred retirement lifestyle, you could also review your Longevity and Legacy strategies and switch funds from the latter to the former.

Equally, investors approaching retirement will gradually increase their Liquidity funds while also running down their Longevity balance.

We expect financial market uncertainty to persist this year, potentially unsettling investors and their long-term plans.

The “3Ls” framework can guide investors in turbulent times and move them closer towards meeting their personal objectives. That’s one resolution worth keeping for the months and years to come.

stbusiness@sph.com.sg

• The writer is Asia-Pacific regional head of UBS Wealth Management’s chief investment office.

SHIN 新明日報

孕妇忌吃龟苓膏为何?

敬请留意今天 新明 活得好

Track your home’s financial performance

Your confidential tracking page

my Property Tracker x

www.srx.com.sg/659921

SRX.com.sg/property-tracker

ST Classifieds

BUY IT • SELL IT • FIND IT

Lecturers wanted

See Class 715 of ST Classifieds



MarketsInsights

# Eyes on Fed meeting, US-China trade talks

Markets see Fed keeping policy unchanged and do not expect much from trade talks: Analysts

Leila Lai

The second round of US-China trade talks and the year's first US Federal Reserve meeting are set to dominate the news cycle in the week ahead, after concerns over the US government shutdown eased over the weekend.

US President Donald Trump last Friday signed a Bill to end the partial government shutdown, at least temporarily. The three-week spending deal will pave the way for a bipartisan House-Senate conference committee to negotiate border security, although Mr Trump has said that if he is dissatis-

fied with the results, the shutdown will resume or he will declare a national emergency to bypass Congress for his funding.

The 35-day shutdown has taken its toll on several key US agencies including the Internal Revenue Service, which struggled to get furloughed workers back in the office last week ahead of the tax filing season starting today, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, which is unlikely to meet the original Jan 30 release date for US fourth-quarter gross domestic product (GDP) figures for last year.

US markets rose on news of the deal last Friday, with all three major indexes advancing. The Dow

Jones Industrial Average gained 0.75 per cent to 24,737.20 and the Nasdaq Composite picked up 1.29 per cent to 7,164.86, with both gaining for the fifth straight week. Meanwhile, the S&P 500 rose 0.85 per cent to 2,664.76 but posted its first weekly loss of the year.

This week, markets will be watching closely the US-China trade negotiations on Jan 30-31, but are unlikely to sink on lack of a deal this time around, said IG Markets analyst Pan Jingyi.

She noted that it is hard to expect much from the meeting as little progress has been made since the first round ended in positive but vague statements, and there is

still some time to the hard deadline of March 1.

The Federal Open Market Committee meeting is scheduled for Jan 29-30, and will be followed by FOMC chair Jerome Powell's press conference.

"Markets are expecting the Fed to keep policy unchanged in the January FOMC, but attention is likely on FOMC chair Powell's press conference, where he may expound further on the merits of being patient and data dependent, especially in the face of a record US government shutdown and missing key economic data like this week's Q4 GDP release," said UOB's Global Economics and Markets Research team.

In the absence of key data to guide market decisions, US corporate earnings will continue to draw investors' attention, the team added.

Important data releases for Asian economies will include China's manufacturing purchasing managers' index figures on Thursday and Friday.

"We aren't anticipating any bounce in activity in January, though the front-loading for the Lunar New Year holiday... leaves scope for an upside surprise," said ING economist Prakash Sakpal.

Several countries will be releasing trade data this week, with New Zealand set to publish numbers for December tomorrow, Malaysia to follow with the same on Wednesday, and South Korea to kick off January trade data on Friday.

Australia will report its fourth-quarter consumer price index on Wednesday, while South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia will release inflation data for January on Friday.

At home, the data docket will be modest, with only the December lending numbers and the fourth-quarter unemployment rate on Thursday.

Australia's stock exchange is closed today for the Australia Day holiday, while Malaysia will take a break on Friday.

leilal@sph.com.sg

## OnTheMove

### Sats

Sats, which handles cargo and provides in-flight catering services, has appointed GGV Capital managing partner Jenny Lee as its independent non-executive director.

Ms Lee has more than 16 years of global venture capital experience and had helped set up GGV's first China operations in 2005. Prior to that, she held various engineering and operating positions at Singapore Technologies Aerospace and was at Morgan Stanley as an investment banker.

"Her strengths are in venture capital investing with a focus on finding and partnering with disruptive technology companies, coming up with latest technical inventions that can benefit the corporate world at large," said Sats last Friday.

"With more than 16 years of experience in venture capital investing, her wealth of experience will enhance and complement the competencies and skills of the present board."

### Frasers Centrepoint Asset Management

Dr Chew Tuan Chiong, chief executive of Frasers Centrepoint Asset Management, will step down by the year end, the manager of Frasers Centrepoint Trust said last week. Dr Chew, 61, has told the board he plans to retire from his roles as CEO and executive director.

His successor "will be announced in due course", Frasers Centrepoint Asset Management chairman Cheong Choong Kong said in a statement.

Since Dr Chew joined in 2010, the trust's assets have grown from \$1.52 billion to \$2.84 billion, the manager noted in its announcement.

### Ayondo

Fintech firm Ayondo has appointed an interim chief executive, Mr Richard Mark Street. The Catalyst-listed company said last week its CEO Robert Paul Lempka has resigned to pursue other interests.

Mr Street has been an adviser to Ayondo since August 2013.

Ayondo, which runs a social trading platform, posted a second-quarter net loss of three million Swiss francs (\$4.1 million), doubling from 1.5 million Swiss francs for the same period a year earlier as trading revenue dipped.

### EY

EY's global managing partner will step up to be the firm's next chairman and chief executive. Mr Carmine Di Sibio will succeed Mr Mark Weinberger, who said last month that he was stepping down and planned to retire.

Mr Di Sibio joined the firm in 1985. He has served as a partner for many large financial services accounts and held several leadership positions, said EY earlier this month. He will take the helm in July.

US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) employees protesting earlier this month against the US partial government shutdown. The 35-day shutdown, which ended last Friday, has taken its toll on several key US agencies, including the IRS and the Bureau of Economic Analysis. US markets rose on news of the deal last Friday, with all three major indexes advancing.

PHOTO: REUTERS



## Ocean Bunkering becomes top marine fuel supplier in Singapore

Singapore-based Ocean Bunkering Services (OBS) topped the 2018 list of largest marine fuel suppliers operating in the world's biggest ship refuelling hub, data released from the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) showed last Friday.

OBS, the bunkering arm of Singapore oil trader and shipper Hin Leong Group, leapt to become Singapore's top marine fuel supplier

by volume last year, after ranking eighth the year before and 31st in 2016, the MPA data showed. Singapore is the world's largest marine refuelling hub, with sales totalling 49.8 million tonnes last year.

Singapore suppliers of marine fuels, or bunkers, have come under pressure over the past couple of years, however, due to tougher rules and shrinking margins from increased competition, resulting in

some companies exiting the market.

OBS' ascent to the top of MPA's supplier list came as little surprise, though, as industry participants had noted the company's growing influence in the market throughout the year. OBS declined to comment when contacted by phone.

In December 2017, an OBS spokesman told Reuters the company saw the challenging market

environment and "the narrowing down of industry participants as an avenue to consolidate our position and expand our reach".

PetroChina International (Singapore) took the second spot in MPA's list, unchanged from 2017, the data showed. Sentek Marine & Trading, which ranked first on the list in 2017, slipped to third last year. Other notable moves include Maersk Oil Trading Singapore

climbing to ninth position last year from the 27th spot in the previous year.

Reuters reported last October that Maersk Oil Trading - in a push by one of the world's biggest ship-fuel buyers into the Asian bunkering hub - had for the first time leased oil storage in Singapore ahead of the changes to global fuel standards coming next year. REUTERS

**TODAY IN**

**联合早报**

LIANHE ZAOBAO

**Come April, admin fee for all work passes to increase by up to 50%**

4月起, 申请或更新外籍员工工作证件, 费用涨高达50%

To subscribe, call 6388-3838 or go to sphsubscription.com.sg

**UOB speeds ahead on cross-border payment**

The bank has tested fund transfers between Singapore and Thailand using mobile numbers and looks to repeat this in the region

Today in **THE BUSINESS TIMES**

Publication of **Sph**

**NATIONAL HEALTHCARE GROUP EYE INSTITUTE @ TTSH**

**PUBLIC FORUM:**

- LASER VISION CORRECTION**
- SQUINT AND DOUBLE VISION**

16 February 2019 | Saturday | 10.00 am - 12.00 pm  
Level 1 | Tan Tock Seng Hospital | TTSH Eye Centre (Main Building)

**PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS:**

- LASER VISION CORRECTION**  
Latest Technologies For The Treatment Of Refractive Errors
  - Laser Refractive Surgery
  - Features of the Latest Excimer Laser Technology in 2019
- Femtosecond LASIK**
  - Its Precision & Safety
- Implantable Contact Lens Surgery**
  - Who Is It For? When Is It Indicated?
- Myths and Misconceptions About LASIK**
- SQUINT AND DOUBLE VISION**  
Treatment Options For Squint (Eye Misalignment) And Double Vision
  - Fusional exercises and prism glasses
  - Eye muscle surgery
  - Small incision surgery
  - Adjustable squint surgery

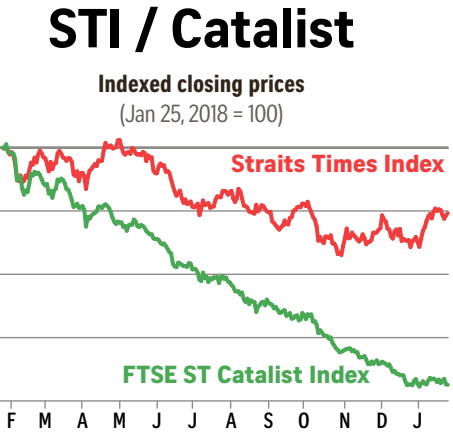
Pre-registration is required and is on a first-come-first-served basis.  
To register, please call 6357 2255 during office hours or email: lasik@ttsh.com.sg  
**No Registration Fees Required.**

TTSH CELEBRATES 175 YEARS OF CARE  
Organised By: **National Healthcare Group EYE INSTITUTE**  
Assisting you at every step of your eye health journey  
**Tan Tock Seng HOSPITAL**  
National Healthcare Group

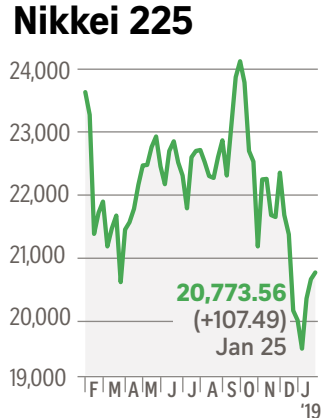
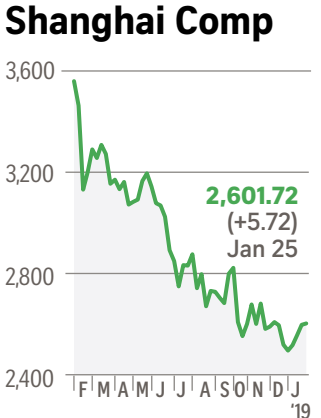
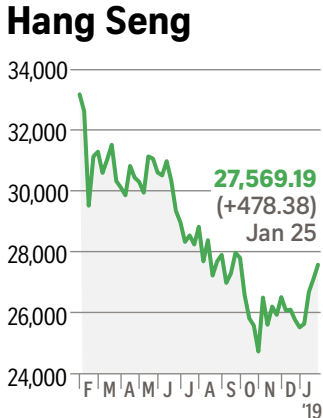


WEEKLY

**Straits Times Index**  
Jan 25, 2019  
**3,202.25** ↓  
**-22.09 (-0.69%)**  
Current streak  
**2 days**  
Week high  
**3,220.56**  
Week low  
**3,171.11**  
52-week high  
**3,615.28 (May 2, 2018)**  
52-week low  
**2,966.45 (Oct 30, 2018)**



**FTSE ST Catalyst Index**  
Jan 25, 2019  
**305.14** ↓  
**-4.02 (-1.30%)**  
Current streak  
**2 days**  
Week high  
**309.71**  
Week low  
**305.14**  
52-week high  
**490.47 (Jan 29, 2018)**  
52-week low  
**303.76 (Jan 3, 2019)**



NOTE: Based on Friday's figures. Source: BLOOMBERG

Straits Times Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	CURRENCY LAST TRADED SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
286	245	Ascendas Reit	271	unch	56051	5.9	1.3
194	161	CapitaCom Trust	190 cd	+6	65623	4.6	1
388	298	CapitaLand	330	unch	34823	3.6	0.7
238	195	CapitaMall Trust	236 cd	+7	71122	4.9	1.2
1359	780	CityDev	906	+8	8887	2	0.8
251	196	ComfortDelGro	233	+19	42445	4.5	2
3128	2265	DBS Grp	2422	-92	16046	5.9	1.4
994	767	DairyFarm USD	US948	unch	2668	2.2	1
139	85.5	Genting Sing	106	+3	17921	3.3	1.7
39	22.5	Golden Agri-Res	27	+0.5	54569	3	0.7
42	23	HPH Trust USD	US25.5	unch	44941	10.3	0.4
744	588	HongkongLand USD	US707	+17	10593	2.8	0.3
6974	1099	JMH USD	US6601	-84	1083	2.4	0.7
4080	3155	JSH USD	US3784	+123	2182	0.8	0.4
4097	2766	Jardine C&C	3726	+20	2240	3.1	1.8
892	567	Keppel Corp	620 cd	-9	14759	4.8	1
1404	1036	OCBC Bank	1147	-28	22925	3.2	1.2
569	455	SATS	485	+3	7777	3.7	3.4
830	672	SGX	757 cd	+15	12289	4	9.5
1184	914	SIA	972	+13	5669	4.1	0.8
292	231	SPH	252	unch	9324	5.2	1.1
371	319	ST Engineering	368	-1	15224	4.1	5.4
360	243	Sembcorp Ind	264	-6	14175	1.9	0.7
363	283	Singtel	305	-2	66013	6.7	1.7
144	57.5	ThaiBev	74 cd	+3	11155	0.9	3.6
3037	2380	UOB	2588	-66	9871	3.9	1.2
930	591	UOL	666	-3	5957	2.6	0.6
2965	1320	Venture Corp	1581	+66	6013	3.8	2
332	297	Wilmar Intl	328	+3	23779	3	1
164	84	YZJ Shipbldg SGD	135	unch	67542	3.3	1

FTSE ST Large & Mid-Cap Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	CURRENCY LAST TRADED SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
286	245	Ascendas Reit	271	unch	56051	5.9	1.3
127	105	Ascott Reit	116	+1	12444	6.1	1
77	59	Bumitama Agri	71.5	+15	2169	1	1.7
185	143	CDL HT Trust	157	+1	9076	6	1.1
194	161	CapitaCom Trust	190 cd	+6	65623	4.6	1
388	298	CapitaLand	330	unch	34823	3.6	0.7
238	195	CapitaMall Trust	236 cd	+7	71122	4.9	1.2
169	133	CapitaR China Tr	142	-1	10575	7.1	0.9
1359	780	CityDev	906	+8	8887	2	0.8
251	196	ComfortDelGro	233	+19	42445	4.5	2
3128	2265	DBS Grp	2422	-92	16046	5.9	1.4
994	767	DairyFarm USD	US948	unch	2668	2.2	1
78	59	Far East HTrust	62.5	-0.5	5386	-	0.7
197	150	First Resources	174	+8	4531	3.9	2.3
236	211	Fraser's Cpt Tr	229 cd	+5	6034	5.2	110.1
116	101	Fraser's L&I Tr	106	+1	39112	6.5	1.2
139	85.5	Genting Sing	106	-2	179321	3.3	1.7
39	22.5	Golden Agri-Res	27	+0.5	54569	3	0.7
230	167	GuocoLand Ltd	186	-2	792	3.8	0.5
42	23	HPH Trust USD	US25.5	unch	44941	10.3	0.4
744	588	HongkongLand USD	US707	+17	10593	2.8	0.3
6974	1099	JMH USD	US6601	-84	1083	2.4	0.7
4080	3155	JSH USD	US3784	+123	2182	0.8	0.4
4097	2766	Jardine C&C	3726	+20	2240	3.1	1.8
892	567	Keppel Corp	620 cd	-9	14759	4.8	1
130	108	Keppel Reit	118 cd	unch	37677	4.7	0.8
215	151	MI	206	-1	11242	5.5	3.9
273	170	Man Oriental USD	US193	+2	834	1.6	1.4
178	152	Mapletree Com Tr	177 cd	+5	35268	5.1	1.2
213	184	Mapletree Ind Tr	203 cd	+5	18337	5.8	1.4
140	118	Mapletree Log Tr	139 cd	+5	61501	5.5	1.2
128	107	Mapletree NAC Tr	123	+3	27947	6.1	0.9
83.5	73	NetLink NBN Tr	77.5	unch	23526	-	1
1404	1036	OCBC Bank	1147	-28	22925	3.2	1.2
215	136	OUE	147	-1	269	2	0.3
92.5	64.5	OUE HT Trust	69	-0.5	6322	0.9	0.9
250	157	Olam Intl	182	+1	2196	4.1	0.9
59.6	28	Oxley	29	-0.5	9523	5.2	0.8
306	256	ParkwayLife Reit	274	+3	5622	4.9	1.6
121	98	Raffles Medical	112	-2	4397	2	2.6
569	455	SATS	485	+3	7777	3.7	3.4
830	672	SGX	757 cd	+15	12289	4	9.5
1184	914	SIA	972	+13	5669	4.1	0.8
337	220	SIA Engineering	253	-3	1085	5.1	1.9
292	231	SPH	252	unch	9324	5.2	1.1
106	98	SPHREIT	102	+1	4612	5.4	1.1
371	319	ST Engineering	368	-1	15224	4.1	5.4
360	243	Sembcorp Ind	264	-6	14175	1.9	0.7
281	149	Sembcorp Marine	163	-4	14444	1.2	1.5
58	39	Silverlake Axis	41	+0.5	11090	7.3	6
147	88.5	SingPost	97	-1	9654	3.6	1.3
363	283	Singtel	305	-2	66013	6.7	1.7
298	158	StarHub	182	+4	6941	8.8	5.6
78	63.5	StarhillGbl Reit	71.5	+0.5	17261	6.4	0.8
217	163	Suntec Reit	193 cd	+4	48927	5.2	0.9
94	57.5	ThaiBev	74 cd	+3	11155	0.9	3.6
102	37	Thomson Medical	75	-0.1	50193	2.7	1.7
3037	2380	UOB	2588	-66	9871	3.9	1.2
930	591	UOL	666	-3	5957	2.6	0.6
2965	1320	Venture Corp	1581	+66	6013	3.8	2
332	297	Wilmar Intl	328	+3	23779	3	1
243	183	Wing Tai	203	+6	3168	3.9	0.5
164	84	YZJ Shipbldg SGD	135	unch	67542	3.3	1
190	116	Yanlord Land	130	+4	7216	5.2	0.5

Price and volume movers

	VOL	CLOSE(\$)	CHANGE	+/-
NSGC	2,800.1	0.002	+0.001	+100.00
RHT HealthTrust	77,787.3	0.025	-0.730	-96.69
Pan Asian	1,389.0	0.011	-0.006	-35.29
Plato Capital	89.8	0.060	+0.009	+17.65
Imperium Crown	42,088.7	0.014	-0.003	-17.65
Katrina	49.9	0.199	+0.031	+18.45
Global Dragon	1.0	0.048	-0.012	-20.00
Y Ventures	619.3	0.120	-0.053	-30.64
SingaporeKitchen	60.0	0.105	-0.015	-12.50
Sanli Env	56.1	0.210	+0.020	+10.53

Shows the stocks with the highest combination of price change and of daily activity relative to the three-month average volume

FTSE ST Small-Cap Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	LAST SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
145	129	AIMSAMP Cap Reit	138	+1	717	7.5	1
70	48	Accordia Golf Tr	54.5	-0.5	1493	7.1	0.6
90.5	74	Ascendas-hTrust	83	+2	4473	-	0.8
119	99	Ascendas-iTrust	110	+2	9650	5.5	1.3
58.5	12.2	Asian Pay TV Tr	13	unch	15160	5.0	0.2
64.5	48	Banyan Tree	59	unch	910	17	0.8
281	115	Best World	268	-4	6543	1.5	9.6
85.5	76	Boustead	79.5	+0.5	908	3.8	12
126	79.5	BreadTalk	89	-0.5	655	7.9	2.4
657	521	Bukit Sembawang	564	+2	49	3.2	11
88	65.5	Cache Log Trust	75 cd	+2	6104	9.7	11
41	unch	Centurion	41	unch	1377	6.1	0.7
115	-3	China Aviation	115	-3	3404	3.9	1
35.5	+1	China Everbright	35.5	+1	637	14	0.7
127	-3	China Sunshine	127	-3	2958	2.4	1.4
69.5	unch	Chip Eng Seng	69.5	unch	4924	5.8	0.6
35.5	unch	Cosco	35.5	unch	14617	-	1.5
599	-3	Delong	599	-3	23	-	0.6
20 cd	-1	Duty Free Intl	20 cd	-1	2573	9.3	1.3
72	unch	EC World Reit	72	unch	418	8.4	0.8
515 kd	-15	ESR-REIT	515 kd	-15	21078	7.5	11
104	+1	First Reit	104	+1	6180	8.3	1
143 kd	-2	Fraser's Com Tr	143 kd	-2	7075	6.7	0.9
71.5	+1	Fraser's HTrust	71.5	+1	3701	-	0.9
19.7	+0.1	Geo Energy Res	19.7	+0.1	10808	5.1	1.2
79.5	unch	HRnetGroup	79.5	unch	372	2.9	2.4
55	+1	Health Mgt Intl	55	+1	193	0.6	5.3
91	-2.5	Hi-P Intl	91	-2.5	16786	27.5	1.4
263	unch	Hong Leong Fin	263	unch	181	4.9	0.6
74	-0.5	IREIT Global	74	-0.5	725	8	1
22	+2	Indofood Agri	22	+2	3518	-	0.3
81	+4	Japfa	81	+4	10964	0.6	1.5
52	-0.5	KSH	52	-0.5	100	4.2	0.9
68 cd	+2.5	Keppel REIT USD	68 cd	+2.5	2521	9.1	0.6
148 cd	+5	Keppel DC Reit	148 cd	+5	29018	4.9	1.4
187	-1	Keppel T&T	187	-1	1696	-	1.2
8.5	-0.2	KrisEnergy	8.5	-0.2	58682	-	1
49.5	-2	Lian Beng	49.5	-2	1604	4.5	0.4
22	+0.5	Lippo Malls Tr	22	+0.5	13382	15.6	0.8
33	-2	MM2 Asia	33	-2	2978	-	1.8
84	+2	ManulifeReit USD	84	+2	3039	6.6	0.7
99.5	-0.5	Metro	99.5	-0.5	651	5	0.6
8.1	susp	Noble	8.1	susp	-	-	-
49	+0.5	OUE Com Reit	49	+0.5	5829	9.5	0.6
58.5	+0.5	PEC	58.5	+0.5	97	3.4	0.6
18.4	-0.4	POSH	18.4	-0.4	679	-	0.5
49.5	unch	Q&M Dental	49.5	unch	168	3.3	3.5
69.5	+3.5	QAF Ltd	69.5	+3.5	1838	7.2	0.8
111	+1	Riverstone	111	+1	147	21	3.6
31	+2	SIIC Environment	31	+2	1412	-	0.5
41.5 cd	unch	Sabana Reit	41.5 cd	unch	3302	7.7	0.7
111	+1	Sheng Siong	111	+1	3099	3	6.1
7	-4.8	Sino Grandass	7	-4.8	13558	-	0.1
62 cd	+1.5	SoilbuildBizReit	62 cd	+1.5	6518	8.5	1
84.5	-2.5	Tianjin ZX USD	84.5	-2.5	718	-	0.7
39	unch	Tuan Sing	39	unch	2509	1.5	0.5
62.5	+2	UMS	62.5	+2	13633	8	1.5
69.5	unch	Valuetronics	69.5	unch	8016	6.6	159.1
12.3	-0.1	Ying Li Intl	12.3	-0.1	33058	-	0.3





# Berita Duka

## Obituary



Telah berpulang ke rumah Bapa di Surga  
Has returned to Our Father in Heaven

## Eka Tjipta Widjaja

Pendiri Sinar Mas  
Founder of Sinar Mas

Pada usia 98 tahun,  
hari Sabtu, 26 Januari 2019, pukul 19.43 WIB  
Saturday, 26 January 2019, at 7:43PM, aged 98.

Jenazah disemayamkan di **Rumah Duka Sentosa, RSPAD Gatot Subroto,  
Jalan Abdul Rachman Saleh No. 24 - Senen, Jakarta Pusat.**

Dikebumikan pada hari, **Sabtu, 2 Februari 2019**  
**di pemakaman keluarga, Desa Marga Mulya, Kabupaten Karawang, Jawa Barat,**  
**berangkat dari Rumah Duka pukul 08.00 WIB**

The body will be laid at Sentosa RSPAD Gatot Subroto funeral home Jalan Abdul Rachman Saleh No.24 - Senen, Central Jakarta  
and will be taken from funeral home at 8am, on Saturday, 2 February 2019, to his final resting place at a family burial plot  
in Marga Mulya Village, Karawang District, West Java.

Kami yang berduka  
Family in mourning

Istri  
Wives

Trini Dewi Lasuki (†) Mellie Pirieh Widjaja (†)

dan seluruh keluarga besar anak, menantu, cucu, cucu menantu  
dan cicit cicit.

and children and their spouses, grandchildren and their spouses,  
and great grand children.

Tanpa mengurangi rasa hormat, ucapan belasungkawa dimohon tidak dalam  
bentuk karangan bunga. Simpati dan tanda kasih, akan didonasikan untuk  
membantu saudara saudara kita, korban bencana alam. Semua donasi yang  
diterima akan dikelola melalui Eka Tjipta Foundation.

The family ask that condolences are not sent in the form of flowers. In honour of his memory  
contributions will be made to victims of natural disasters through the Eka Tjipta Foundation.





SPORT

13

AGE OF ALYSA LIU, THE YOUNGEST U.S. FIGURE SKATING CHAMPION C6



World No. 1 Novak Djokovic posing with the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup in the men's locker room after defeating Rafael Nadal in the men's singles final at the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

Australian Open 2019

# DJOKOVIC PUTS ON MASTERCLASS

Serb turns contest into clinic as he outclasses Nadal for record 7th triumph in Melbourne



**Rohit Brijnath**  
Assistant Sports Editor  
In Melbourne

On a cool Sunday night as he walked around the court and through the corridors, Novak Djokovic finally unburdened himself. Threw his racket to a spectator. Gave his shoes away. Signed his jacket, unzipped it and handed it to a fan.

He didn't need anything because he had the only thing he desired. History. Usually he chases it, but now it was following him. Wherever he walked, a gloved security man trailed him. Holding a trophy that had his name engraved on it for a record seventh time.

Djokovic is the best player in the world and on Sunday he played some of the best tennis we might have ever seen. He played it with the precision of a maths wizard and as unbendingly as an interrogator. He played it against Rafael Nadal but at times was only playing with him. He won the Australian Open 6-3-, 6-2, 6-3 and it takes a rare talent to turn a contest into a clinic.

Djokovic lost 12 games in six sets over the semis and final and finished the men's final in 23 minutes

MAJOR MISSION

**I do want to definitely focus myself on continuing to improve my game... So I would be able to compete at such a high level for the years to come, and have a shot at eventually getting closer to Roger's record. It's still far.**

**NOVAK DJOKOVIC**, 15-time Grand Slam champion, on chasing Roger Federer's record 20 majors.

less than the women's finale. At times he resembled a genius on remote control. After he was done, the Serb raised his arms into the air and it looked like he was pointing to the skies. Perhaps he was trying to explain the level of tennis he was playing. Seventh heaven stuff.

"It ranks right at the top," said Djokovic later of his performance. "Under the circumstances, playing against Nadal, such an important match, yeah, I mean, it's amazing. Obviously back-to-back semi-finals and final, I think I made 15 unforced errors in total.

"It's quite pleasantly surprising to myself as well, even though I always believe I can play this way. At this level, as I said, under the circumstances, it was truly a perfect match."

Djokovic respects Nadal and Roger Federer yet he is committed to erasing them from history books. He now leads Nadal 28-25 on all surfaces, 8-0 in their last eight hard-

court meetings and has won as many Australian Opens now as both put together.

The greatest player ever is never a truth but only an argument. A sort of game within a sport. Djokovic has won the last three Grand Slam titles, has 15 Slams in total, two behind Nadal and five behind Federer and this chase looks irresistible. The only thing which could defeat him is his own body. "It's still far," he said of the feat, but still possible.

Twelve months ago Djokovic had his elbow repaired and it should be investigated for wires, levers and a radar. After all he resembles a brilliant, bionic beast. He returned like a mind-reader, moved "super quick" as Nadal said, and could hit a 10 cent coin on the baseline on the dead run if you challenged him. It's the equivalent of target shooting while balancing on a high wire.

Djokovic started rapidly and never relented. He won 13 of the first 14 points and lost one point in his first six service games. Yet no number can adequately clarify his control. It was one of those nights, which Lionel Messi has occasionally, and Stephen Curry, when hand, foot, eye and ball create their own perfect concerto.

Competition is what people came for but this, in its own way, was a celebration of tennis. The night wasn't dramatic and yet it was hypnotising. The Serb broke Nadal five times and allowed him a sniff of only a single breakpoint. Logic told us Djokovic had to miss and yet he didn't. History told us Nadal would resist him and yet he couldn't. People applauded for they recognised that before them was a man stretching the boundaries of excellence.

Nadal called Djokovic's performance "fantastic" but qualified that he was not fully tuned. From autumn last year, his knee, ankle, thigh and abdomen have complained, just further instalments in the grand mutiny by Nadal's body. In his latest comeback he has been offensively sharp but not had the time to tune his defensive game.

"If I am able to run 100 per cent and to resist every ball, then you find ways. The things that look easy for (Djokovic) become little bit more difficult when you have to do it one more time, one more time and one more time." Still, he acknowledged, "is true that maybe was difficult to beat him even if I was at my 100 per cent."

But this night belonged to Djokovic, a man so lean he looks built from wire and mountain rope. He is not an artist but a fascinating athletic scientist, who will now look and learn and tweak his game like a mechanic at a Formula One pit.

The player who wins the Australian Open is always unique for only he in that year can achieve a feat accomplished by only two men in history, neither of them named Roger or Rafa. Only Rod Laver (1962 and 1969) and Don Budge (1938) have negotiated the Grand Slam, which is all four Slams won in a calendar year.

It is extraordinarily difficult and yet Djokovic on Sunday was exceptionally dazzling. He will need luck but in his eyes you can see his drive. At his press conference, champagne was popped but the ascetic champion didn't reach for a glass. Perhaps he is already in training.

rohitb@sph.com.sg

## Nadal vows to keep fighting to become better

MELBOURNE • Rafael Nadal said he took a lot of positives out of the Australian Open on his return from injury, despite being thrashed by Novak Djokovic in the men's singles final yesterday.

The Spanish second seed had played an outstanding level of tennis at the tournament without dropping a set until he met his arch-rival on the Rod Laver Arena.

And the 32-year-old had no answer to the world No. 1's booming groundstrokes and precision serve

as he was outclassed 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 in just 2hr 4min.

Despite the rout, Nadal said he was content with being able to even reach the final given the injury problems that prevented him from playing any matches after the US Open until he got to Melbourne.

"Tonight was not my best day, and, of course, I had someone who played a lot better than me," he said.

"I have been going through tough moments in the last year. (I have

played) only nine events and, since the US Open, I was not able to play until the first round here.

"Even if tonight was not my night, it's so important for me to be where I am coming back from injury. I really believe I played a great two weeks of tennis, there's a good energy and good inspiration for what is coming."

Nadal had not played a main tour event since a knee problem forced him to retire during his US Open semi-final against Juan Mar-

tin del Potro in September.

The 32-year-old had surgery on his ankle in November to remove a loose intra-articular body and resumed training only last month.

He played the opening round at an exhibition event in Abu Dhabi to start his season, where he lost to South African Kevin Anderson, and withdrew from the warm-up Brisbane International. But, en route to the final, he emphatically shattered the dreams of three of the NextGen stars - 19-year-old Alex de Minaur,

Frances Tiafoe, 21, and Stefanos Tsitsipas, 20.

And Nadal, with 17 Grand Slam titles to his name, vowed there was more to come despite being 32 and guaranteed to be considered among the best in the men's game.

"I can only say one thing. I am going to keep working hard and fighting to be better," he said.

"I want to keep fighting and practising to give myself better chances in the future."

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

FOUR-DIGIT DRAW			
Jan 27 2019			
FIRST ♦ 0949			
SECOND ♦ 1644			
THIRD ♦ 7876			
STARTERS			
1832	3280	3342	
3663	3708	4159	
4531	6146	8630	
	9751		
CONSOLATIONS			
0874	1037	1157	
2456	2899	3097	
3817	5205	7346	
	8290		



Australian Open 2019

# OSAKA'S NEXT GOAL: THE 'NAOMI SLAM'

Unfazed by pressure, new world No. 1 wants to emulate Serena by winning all four majors

MELBOURNE • Naomi Osaka cringed when asked in an interview on Australian television if she was ready to become the face of the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo.

"Yikes," the newly minted Australian Open women's champion said, wincing. "Hopefully, for their sake, they don't do that."

The 21-year-old Japanese is shy and reserved but certainly not short on confidence.

When the new world rankings came out today, the reigning US Open champion will become the first Asian singles player, male or female, to reach No. 1.

Yesterday, she laughed off suggestions that her meteoric rise had put her under pressure, saying that she was not satisfied with back-to-back majors and hoped to complete a "Naomi Slam" after her success at Melbourne Park.

"The way the tennis world is, there's always the next tournament, the next Slam, and we all just want to keep training hard and winning more," Osaka told reporters, as she posed with the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup at the Brighton Beach in Melbourne. "So I'm not really sure if I'm satisfied."

Osaka became the first woman to

DOING A 'SERENA SLAM'

**I'm not going to lie and say that thought hasn't crossed my mind... I feel like I have to think about that.**



**NAOMI OSAKA**, newly minted Australian Open women's singles champion, on the prospect of emulating her idol Serena Williams holding all four majors in the same 12-month period.

win successive majors since Serena Williams in 2015 and the youngest since Martina Hingis in 1998.

Williams went on to complete her second "Serena Slam" – holding all four majors in the same 12-month period – and Osaka was excited about the prospect of claiming the French Open and Wimbledon to emulate her idol's feat.

"I'm not going to lie and say that thought hasn't crossed my mind," Osaka said. "For me, I just have to take it one tournament at a time, especially Indian Wells is coming up and I won that tournament last year. I feel like I have to think about that."

While her maiden Grand Slam was marred by losing finalist Williams' tirade at the umpire and boos from the Flushing Meadows crowd, this time Osaka allowed her

follow-up success in Melbourne to soak in.

"It means a lot. I think moments like this are what you train for as a little kid to play the Grand Slams," she said. "To win another one is definitely a dream come true."

Osaka was unfazed by the attention she was receiving, saying she was in the spotlight even when her ranking was languishing in the 70s. She said it was misleading to view her rise as an overnight success.

"I guess looking from the outside, from you guys' view, it does," Osaka told reporters. "For me, every practice and every match that I've played, it feels like the year is short and long at the same time."

"I'm aware of all the work that I put in. I know all the sacrifices that every player does to stay at this level. In my opinion, it didn't feel fast. It felt kind of long."

Osaka added that she had learnt about resilience at the Australian Open after completing three three-set matches on her way to the title, likening herself to "a robot" in the final set against Petra Kvitová.

Quizzed about off-court pressure that accompanies life as a tennis superstar, Osaka said she preferred to concentrate on her game.

"I feel like I'm going with the flow. That's sort of been my motto my whole life," she said.

NY TIMES, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Australian Open winner Naomi Osaka holding the championship trophy at Brighton Beach in Melbourne yesterday. The 21-year-old Japanese will rise to world No. 1 today. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

## Kvitová promises to build on 'crazy' run to final

MELBOURNE • Comeback queen Petra Kvitová said she was hurting, but still felt like a winner after going down with guns blazing against Japan's Naomi Osaka in an epic Australian Open women's singles final.

The two-time Wimbledon champion overcame incredible odds to even play tennis again after a knife attack damaged her racket hand in late 2016.

Doctors had given her just a 10 per cent chance of returning to the sport and Kvitová said reaching the

final of the season-opening Grand Slam was an achievement in itself.

"It's hurting a lot today, I wanted to win and have the trophy," the 28-year-old said after the 7-6 (7-2), 5-7, 6-4 defeat.

"But I think I already won two years ago. So for me, it's crazy. I can hardly believe that I just played in a Grand Slam final again."

"I've been through many, many things, not really great ones. Still few things which I can improve, and we'll do it. So it's not the end."

Yeah, I will be back for sure."

The Czech rued her inability to convert her chances in the final. She had five break-point opportunities in the opening set but could not convert any of them and then went on to lose the tie-breaker.

"I don't think I played really badly, but I just maybe could have gone a little bit more aggressive one or two rallies," she lamented.

Regardless of the result, what Kvitová calls her "second career" post-attack is back on track.

She put together an 11-match winning streak on the way to the final, including a title in Brisbane, and did not drop a set on her way to the decider at Melbourne Park.

Her run to the final will lift her to No. 2 in the world rankings today, behind only Osaka, equalling the career-high position she reached after winning her first Wimbledon title in 2011.

Such a comeback appeared unthinkable after the December 2016 attack. Australian media this week

published gruesome photographs of her injured hand, with the flesh sliced open and the tip of the index finger almost cut off.

She said she did not know if she would ever hold a racket again.

"It's not 100 per cent and never will be. It's just how it is," she said.

"I'm just trying to take maximum from the minimum. I feel great. I'm playing great tennis. I don't think that I could really imagine at the time being this kind of player again," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

## Rose in driver's seat, Scott lurks at Torrey Pines

LOS ANGELES • World No. 1 Justin Rose shook off two double-bogeys to card a three-under 69 on Saturday and maintain a three-shot lead in the US PGA Tour's Farmers Insurance Open.

Six birdies and an eagle on the South Course at Torrey Pines saw Englishman Rose maintain his grip on the tournament with an 18-under total of 198.

"I'm playing well and just need to keep producing," said Rose, whose 20 birdies the last few days are the most in the field.

"It would be a great way to start 2019."

Rose was three strokes clear of Australian Adam Scott, who had

seven birdies and an eagle in his 65 for a 15-under total of 201.

First-round leader Jon Rahm of Spain was alone in third on 202 after a 68.

Rose led by as many as six strokes, but his second double-bogey of the day, at the par-four 14th, trimmed the lead and he closed with a bogey at the par-five 18th, where his second shot from the left rough found the water.

Even with the slip-ups, Rose tied the 54-hole tournament record at 18 under.

Scott's 65 was the low round of the day and put him within striking distance in his first appearance at Torrey Pines since the 2008 US



**Justin Rose tied the 54-hole tournament record at 18 under, despite a few slip-ups.**

Open. "It's a tough golf course but, if you ball strike it, you can actually shoot a good score," said Scott, the 2013 Masters champion.

Tiger Woods, whose eight wins at Torrey Pines include the most recent of his 14 Major titles at the 2008 US Open, is just looking to finish on a high note.

He failed to gain any ground

with a 71 that left him 13 shots off the pace.

Woods said he drove it well, but needed to improve his iron play and get some putts to drop to make his goal of reaching double-digits under par yesterday, which would give him "something positive" to take into the rest of this year.

"I've got to play a little bit better than I have," said the former world No. 1, who added that he needs to "drive it like I did today and hit my irons a little bit better and give myself plenty of looks."

"It's frustrating because I'm hitting a lot of good putts and they're just not going in."

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

### SportsWorld

#### Antonsen upsets Momota for title

JAKARTA • Denmark's Anders Antonsen won his first Indonesia Masters title after defeating world No. 1 Kento Momota of Japan yesterday.

The 20th-ranked Antonsen, who was not accompanied by his coach, upset Momota 21-16, 14-21 and 21-16 in a game that lasted one hour and 19 minutes.

The 21-year-old told reporters afterwards that he had "always been dreaming about winning one of these titles, so it's crazy that I'm finally here". AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

#### Morata on his way to Atletico Madrid

MADRID • Spain striker Alvaro Morata said yesterday he had passed a medical with Atletico Madrid, with his loan move to the LaLiga side from Chelsea expected to be confirmed soon.

Morata, who passed through Atletico's youth academy before switching to rivals Real Madrid, will sign an 18-month loan deal, with an option for a permanent deal.

Chelsea's club-record signing, who moved to Stamford Bridge from Real for £60 million (\$8108 million) in July 2017, scored only five goals in 16 Premier League appearances this term, but Morata told reporters "the past is the past". REUTERS

#### Russian athletes apply as neutrals

MOSCOW • Russia's Athletics Federation (Rusaf) has received 177 applications from its athletes bidding to compete as neutrals on the international stage this year, the TASS news agency said on Saturday.

The IAAF has simplified the process for athletes who had neutral status last year, and last week said two-time reigning high jump world champion Mariya Lasitskensk and former 110m hurdles world champion Sergey Shubenkov were among 42 cleared to compete. Russian athletes can compete as neutrals since 2017, after Rusaf was suspended by the IAAF in 2015 over state-sponsored doping practices in the country. DPA

#### Winner Thurman wants Pacquiao

NEW YORK • Keith Thurman returned from a near two-year layoff to retain his World Boxing Association (WBA) welterweight world title with a 12-round majority decision over fellow American Joseito Lopez on Saturday.

Thurman afterwards called out Filipino great Manny Pacquiao, who holds the lesser version of his WBA belt, saying "he would even fight him in the Philippines if I have to". AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SPORTS FIXTURES HIGHLIGHTS				
Event	Home	Away	Timing	Venue
Mon, 28 Jan 2019				
Asian Cup	Iran	Japan	10.00pm	LW*
Tue, 29 Jan 2019				
Italian League	Empoli	Genoa	3.30am	LW*
English Cup	Barnet	Brentford	3.45am	LW*
Spanish League	Alaves	Vallecano	4.00am	LW*
LW* : Telecast available at Livewire(Marina Bay Sands) only. Visit singaporepools.com for the latest 'Live' telecast listing.				
LOTTERY				
TOTO Mon, 28 Jan 2019, 6.30pm Draw No. 3444/2019				
Group 1 Prize <b>\$2,400,000</b> est.				
Draw Venue: Singapore Pools (Private) Limited, 210 Middle Road, #01-01, Singapore 188994				
No person under the age of 18 years shall be allowed to purchase a ticket or to claim any prize. LW: Livewire (MBS) & Livewire (RWS) (21 years and above) Livewire (Singapore Pools) (21 years and above during 'Live' telecast) SB: Sportsbuzz@live (21 years and above) Singapore Pools Account Service. Call 6796 6688 for more details.				
PLAY RESPONSIBLY Stay Legal. National Problem Gambling Helpline: 1800-6-666-666 RCB Reg No.: 196003020				



# MAGIC OF THE FA CUP ALIVE AND WELL

## Premier League teams West Ham, Everton shocked by struggling Wimbledon, Millwall

LONDON • Whoever said the magic of the FA Cup was dead should have paid a visit to Kingsmeadow, The Den and the New Meadow on Saturday.

While the competition has taken a backseat to the Premier League and the Champions League in recent years, it still represents the perfect opportunity for English football's lesser lights to have their day in the sun.

And shine they did as AFC Wimbledon and Millwall humbled their top-tier opponents in the fourth round of the FA Cup in raucous post-game scenes at their respective home grounds.

Wimbledon revived memories of their "Crazy Gang" heyday in the late 80s, knocking West Ham out with a 4-2 win at Kingsmeadow.

The shock loss to Wimbledon, who are rock-bottom in League One, left Hammers boss Manuel Pellegrini "ashamed" of his players.

He told reporters after his side went 3-0 down before the break: "Was I angry at half-time? Yes of course."

"I didn't expect it, the attitude, playing against a team that sits two divisions below us but, in football, you can lose in two or three balls."

"They started the way we needed to start and, when you have such high pace with the quality of the players... We didn't have the same level."

Wimbledon defender Toby Sibbick, who was born 11 years after the club won the 1988 FA Cup, their only major silverware – told BT Sport scoring the fourth goal had

been "one of the highlights for me".

He added: "I thought the boys were excellent. It's a great win, look at the fans, this is what it's about."

Everton were also stunned by Championship strugglers Millwall 3-2 but, unlike Pellegrini, Marco Silva sought to deflect blame by pinning the defeat on the lack of a Video Assistant Referee (VAR).

The Toffees felt aggrieved as their opponents' second goal appeared to go in off the arm of Jake Cooper.

To make matters worse, the strike was shown on a big screen in the stadium immediately afterwards, with the handball obvious to everyone watching at The Den.

Premier League grounds hosting FA Cup ties are using VAR this season but the technology was not installed at Millwall – a situation the Everton manager said was unfair.

Claiming "it does not make sense", the Portuguese bemoaned: "If we are to be fair with all the

clubs, you have to be fair with the competition and you also have to do it for all the games."

"Now we go home with big frustration. I am not here just to be angry with the referee but it is true."

"It was a clear handball in the moment. The players, they saw and went to speak with the assistant and thousands of people saw (it) on the big screen."

Shrewsbury Town nearly made it a trio of upsets on a day of surprises and it took an added-time equaliser from Wolves' Matt Doherty to deny them a place in the fifth round.

The League One outfit were leading 2-0 after 70 minutes at New Meadow and Shrewsbury manager Sam Ricketts admitted to "real mixed emotions" after Nuno Espirito Santo's men forced a replay.

He told the BBC: "I base myself on performances and that was very, very good, but I am disappointed not to win the game."

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, REUTERS



Millwall's Murray Wallace scoring the winner past goalkeeper Jordan Pickford in their 3-2 victory over Everton in the FA Cup fourth round at The Den on Saturday. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

# Guardiola laments de Jong's move to Barcelona

LONDON • While Pep Guardiola was left purring with delight at his side's "desire to play good and always improve" as Manchester City romped to a 5-0 hammering of Burnley in the fourth round of the FA Cup, he also had a tinge of regret.

Not at his side's display at the Etihad on Saturday as the Premier League champions remain on course for an unprecedented quadruple, but rather at being beaten to the punch by Barcelona for Frenkie de Jong's signature.

The 21-year-old Dutch interna-

tional, arguably the hottest mid-field prospect around, agreed to join the Spanish champions from Ajax in the summer for a fee of €75 million (\$115.8 million) on Wednesday.

However, de Jong, who also turned down Paris Saint-Germain, had been in discussions with City regarding a potential move, telling Dutch broadcaster NOS over the weekend that he "spoke with Guardiola".

Having missed out on his services, the Spaniard felt the club had to be "quicker and smarter" in the

transfer market if they were to land targets in the future.

Urging City's Abu Dhabi owners to try and sign players earlier in their careers so that they are more affordable, he said: "The transfer market, the salaries, increase a lot. After Neymar went to PSG (for €222 million), prices have increased to incredible levels."

"We have to adapt. It's difficult to buy top, top players at a good price."

"It's almost impossible. Maybe we have to trust in the young players (in the academy) and help them develop their own personality here."

"I said many times, Barcelona and (Real) Madrid, it's impossible to fight against them, for the prestige, the incredible league, the incredible clubs they are."

"The players have to take their own decisions. When they don't want to come, it's because they want another place. There are other options, but we are going to try if we believe we need players in that position."

He was also adamant that having the correct pay structure was vital to maintaining team spirit.

The 48-year-old, who splashed

out a club-record fee of £60 million (\$107.1 million) for Riyad Mahrez last summer, added: "We try to keep the harmony in the locker room with the wages. When you have no balance with that, then there is always a problem with the mood in the locker room."

"One of the good things that City have done is keeping that balance."

"The reality is that it's not just one or two teams paying a lot on wages. There are many and sometimes, we can't compete with that. At the end of the day, we want players who want to come here." THE GUARDIAN

SKY-HIGH PRICES

**The transfer market, the salaries, increase a lot. After Neymar went to PSG (for €222 million), prices have increased to incredible levels. We have to adapt.**



PEP GUARDIOLA, Manchester City manager, urging City's Abu Dhabi owners to try and sign players earlier in their careers so that they are more affordable.

## Relatives raise funds to continue Sala search

LONDON • Relatives of missing Premier League player Emiliano Sala on Saturday began a privately funded search for his plane, which disappeared over the English Channel, after local coast guard called off their own rescue mission.

The news was announced by an online fundraising campaign for the operation, and confirmed to Agence France-Presse by Maria Jose Sottini, a friend of the Argentinian striker's family.

"The appeal launched late Friday afternoon enabled Emiliano Sala's relatives, via a specialised organisation, to resume research in the Channel early this Saturday morn-



Tributes left outside Cardiff City Stadium for Emiliano Sala, whose plane disappeared from the radar over the English Channel last week. PHOTO: REUTERS

ing," said a statement on the GoFundMe website.

"Two boats are leading the operations."

Around 4,000 people have so far contributed to the campaign, which was organised by Sala's agency, Sport Cover, raising almost

€321,343 (\$496,167).

The target of €300,000 was reached within a day.

According to the BBC, fellow footballers including Ilkay Gundogan from Manchester City, Paris Saint-Germain's Adrien Rabiot and Corentin Tolisso of Bayern Munich

have donated to the fund, as did Sala's former manager at Nantes, Vahid Halilhodzic.

A light aircraft transporting Sala, who signed for Cardiff City two Saturdays ago, vanished from the radar around 20km north of the Channel island of Guernsey last Monday night.

The 28-year-old, who moved from French Ligue 1 club Nantes for a club-record fee of £15 million (\$26.7 million), had been flying to the Welsh capital for his first training session after saying goodbye to his former teammates.

Rescue workers formally called off the search for the missing plane on Thursday.

As investigators probe what happened, it emerged that while his football agent Willie McKay had arranged for the ill-fated flight, he did not choose the Piper Malibu plane or its pilot, who has since been named as David Ibbotson.

"We had no involvement in selecting a plane or a pilot and wish to make clear we do not own the plane that Emiliano flew on," the Briton said in a statement.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Library talks by seasoned journalists  
CO-ORGANISED BY THE STRAITS TIMES AND  
NATIONAL LIBRARY BOARD

askST@NLB

you ask, we answer, come listen

What's trending for travel  
in the US and beyond



Lee Siew Hua  
Travel Writer,  
The Straits Times



Richard Launder  
President and CEO  
of Destination  
America and Director  
of The Travel  
Corporation USA

Central Public Library  
100 Victoria Street  
B1-01 Programme Zone

Friday, Feb 15, 2019  
7 to 8.30pm  
(Registration starts at 6pm)

Sign up at  
<http://str.sg/askSiewHua3>

For more information, go to [www.straitstimes.com/askst](http://www.straitstimes.com/askst)



# SLINGERS ARISE FROM SLUMBER

**Coach Neo's pep talk prevents another late collapse as they douse the Heat to end losing run**

**Xener Gill**

Within the first eight minutes of their Asean Basketball League (ABL) game against Saigon Heat yesterday, the Singapore Slingers had built up a 25-2 lead at the OCBC Arena, and they possibly thought they already had the win in the bag.

At half-time, there was still no indication of a slip-up as they maintained the wide gap at 51-29 with stifling defence and clinical finishing – centre John Fields led the way with seven of his eight field-goal attempts in the first two periods.

Then, almost inexplicably, as Slingers coach Neo Beng Siang put it, an “unacceptable disaster” struck in the next quarter as previously telepathic teammates turned into stunned strangers.

Passes went astray, screens were not set up, and they even managed to get into each other's way while running into positions as the Heat went on a 33-10 run to take a 62-61 lead.

The Heat's imports Trevon Hughes, Murphy Burnatowski and Kyle Barone contributed 26 points in that run.

But, unlike previous late collapses, at least there were 10 more minutes for Neo to rally his troops.

And the Slingers arose from their slumber to win 87-80 to improve their win-loss record to 8-6 and climb to fourth in the 10-team ABL, behind Alab Pilipinas (10-2), Heat and Formosa Dreamers (both 10-5).

Neo said: “Instead of pushing the ball up the court quickly, we were walking. So we didn't get what we wanted in offence, and then everyone stopped playing defence.”

“I told them we needed to increase our tempo, win it for the fans and stop our run of two defeats (against Mono Vampire and CLS Knights Indonesia).”

Xavier Alexander (25 points) continued his tantalising duel with Heat guard Hughes (24 points) – both were called for a technical foul at half-time for a scuffle – in the final quarter, but it was the Slingers swingman who was better supported by teammates at the end.

Fellow Americans Fields (20 points and 21 rebounds) and Jerran Young (21 points) recorded big numbers, but the likes of veteran guard Desmond Oh (10 points) and power forward Delvin Goh (11 points and 10 rebounds) also stepped up.

Young said: “Adversity is part of basketball. We can't get too big on our ups and too low with our downs.”

“We continued to communicate, kept our poise, played good defence and tried to execute our plays. Eventually, the game went our way because we stayed aggressive.”

The Slingers will take on the Knights on Sunday at the OCBC Arena.

They will again face their former player Wong Wei Long, who scored 18 points, including three treys that gave him the all-time ABL record of 215 three-pointers in the Indonesian side's 89-74 win on Jan 20.

xenerg@sph.com.sg



Singapore Slingers forward Jerran Young rising high for a lay-up in the 87-80 win over Saigon Heat at the OCBC Arena yesterday. The American finished with 21 points as the Slingers improved their win-loss record to 8-6 and climbed to fourth in the 10-team Asean Basketball League. ST PHOTO: JONATHAN CHOO

## Warriors score 10th straight win, end Boston's home run

LOS ANGELES • The TV cameras were out in full force for the first National Basketball Association (NBA) game between the Golden State Warriors and the Boston Celtics this season.

The nationally televised match-up had been billed as a meeting between an unstoppable force – Golden State were on a nine-game winning streak – and an immovable object – Boston had not lost their past 10 games at home.

And it certainly lived up to the hype, with no shortage of thrills and spills at the TD Garden as the game see-sawed back and forth, with neither team leading by more than nine points in the contest.

There were eight ties in the fourth quarter alone, before two free throws from Klay Thompson

with 46.1 seconds left on the clock finally put the two-time defending NBA champions ahead for good.

Golden State held on to beat the hosts 115-111 on Saturday night to extend their run to 10 straight wins.

Their ninth road victory on the bounce – the longest in the league this season – also ended Boston's five-game win streak and Kevin Durant, who led all scorers with 33 points, praised his team for “staying poised”.

He told reporters post-game: “They (The Celtics) started off that fourth quarter on a nice little run to cut the lead.”

“My teammates had my back. But coming in here on the road to get a W (win) in Boston is pretty solid for us.”

Despite Kyrie Irving's double-

double – he had 32 points and 10 assists – Boston could not seize the opportunities to reclaim the upper hand in the dying moments, with Marcus Smart and Al Horford both missing beyond the arc after Thompson sank his baskets.

Horford and Irving had two and three turnovers in the final 12 minutes respectively and the former be-moaned their “careless plays”.

He told the Boston Herald: “Give them credit, but I had a couple of turnovers, miscommunication. I have to be more solid with the ball.”

The Celtics probably would have gotten away with some sloppy play against any other team, but not against the Warriors and definitely not in the form they are in.

Warning the rest of the contenders they have now “got an edge

about us”, Stephen Curry, who had 24 points, told ESPN: “Probably the best thing we're doing now is taking care of the ball.”

“Playmakers are making the right decisions more times than not. Our defence has been better. People are settling into rotations with DeMarcus (Cousins, who added 15 points and eight rebounds in 23 minutes in his fourth game of the season).

“It hasn't been perfect, and we know we can still be better. We've talked about putting a run together for a while now, and we're right in the middle of a really good one.”

“You want to create good vibes, especially with the All-Star break coming up, and continue to build momentum (in) the second half of the season.”

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, REUTERS



Golden State Warriors forward Draymond Green (left) and Boston Celtics guard Kyrie Irving battle for a loose ball at the TD Garden. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Xiu Yi registers record in 10m air rifle event

Singapore shooter Ho Xiu Yi set a national record in the women's 10m air rifle event at the H&N Cup in Munich, Germany, on Saturday.

The 19-year-old finished fourth in the qualifying round with a score of 630.8, breaking the 629.6 mark previously set by Martina Lindsay Veloso in the Singapore Cup in November last year.

In the final, Xiu Yi finished seventh out of eight shooters with a score of 144.5, ahead of teammate Jasmine Ser, who had 122.7.

“I feel really happy that I'm able to set the national record today,” said Singapore Sports School student Xiu Yi.

“It is a good indicator that I'm on the right track towards preparing

for the World Cups to fight for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics quota.”

The four legs of the International Shooting Sport Federation World Cup 2019 will be held in New Delhi (Feb 20-28), Beijing (April 21-29), Munich (May 24-31) and Rio de Janeiro (Aug 26 -Sept 3), culminating in the final in Al Ain in the United Arab Emirates from Oct 8-15.

“I did what I have been doing since last year and I have been steadily improving,” she added.

“Now it's about staying consistent and working towards better mental preparations for bigger competitions.”

Laura Chia



Ho Xiu Yi finished fourth in the qualifying round of the H&N Cup with a score of 630.8. She broke the 629.6 mark set by Martina Lindsay Veloso at the Singapore Cup last November. ST FILE PHOTO

### Next 48 Hours

#### TODAY

##### FOOTBALL

Asian Cup S-final: Iran v Japan (Singtel TV Ch114 & StarHub Ch208, 9.50pm). Spanish LaLiga Alaves v Rayo Vallecano (StarHub Ch213, tomorrow, 3.55am).

#### TOMORROW

##### BASKETBALL

ABL Wolf Warriors v Alab Pilipinas (StarHub Ch202, 8pm).

##### FOOTBALL

Asian Cup S-final: Qatar v UAE (Singtel TV Ch114 & StarHub Ch208, 9.50pm). English Premier League Newcastle v Man City (Singtel Ch102 & StarHub Ch227), Man United v Burnley (Ch103 & Ch228) – Wednesday, 4am. Arsenal v Cardiff (Ch104 & Ch229), Fulham v Brighton (Ch105 & Ch230), Huddersfield v Everton (Ch106 & Ch231), Wolves v West Ham (Ch107 & Ch232) – Wednesday, 3.35am.

For latest updates, go to singtelv.com.sg & starhubgo.com or check the on-screen TV guide.



## SPORT

NEW US SKATING  
CHAMP ONLY 13

## Prodigy Alysa Liu hailed as the 'future of US ladies skating' after winning free skate event

DETROIT • Alysa Liu is so young that she is not eligible to compete in the next three World Figure Skating Championships.

But Tara Lipinski, who was rink-side at the Little Caesars Arena doing commentary for NBC, has every confidence that Liu is the "future of United States' ladies skating".

Lipinski made her proclamation after witnessing the 13-year-old Liu clinch the free skate competition at the US Figure Skating Championships – the youngest to do so.

Liu stole the show by landing eight triples to finish with a 217.51 total score, putting her almost four points ahead of defending champion and runner-up Bradie Tennell.

On Thursday, she had become only the third woman to land a triple axel cleanly at a US nationals after Tonya Harding (1991) and

Kimmie Meissner (2005).

On Friday night, she went one better to become the first to land two in a programme.

"All that hard work really paid off," said an emotional Liu. "It sunk in right after I did it and then it kind of went away."

"I'm just waiting for it to sink back in again. I was just happy that I beat my personal record, and I did a clean long programme."

Lipinski, who at 14 had been the youngest national women's champion herself, was left in little doubt that Liu could surpass her feats.

Her coach Laura Lipetsky held this belief despite an unusually high number of Olympians and former national champions, who either withdrew or decided not to travel to Detroit, where the US Figure Skating Championships were held.

Among the non-attendees were three-time national champion Ashley Wagner, and Olympic bronze medallists Gracie Gold, Karen Chen and Mirai Nagasu.

However, 1998 Nagano Games gold medallist Lipinski still felt it was a watershed moment as "records are made to be broken".

Writing on her Instagram page, she said: "I couldn't be more excited that @alysaxliu was the one to break it. What a phenomenal talent. So well-deserved."

"Twenty-two years ago, I tried to push the technical envelope and now

"Alysa has taken it to the next level. My bet was on her from the start and she will be the one to push the next generation forward."

"It is quite an honour that she is the one to do it."

According to The San Francisco Chronicle, Liu is the eldest of five children born to two surrogate mothers.

Arthur, her China-born single fa-



Alysa Liu won't be old enough to take part in the World Figure Skating Championships until 2022. PHOTO: REUTERS

ther, is a lawyer who left the country after the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests and has supported his daughter by scheduling court appearances around her events.

He will not have to request time off for this year's world champi-

onships, which will be held in March in Saitama, Japan as skaters must have turned 15 by July 1 of last year to be eligible.

Liu, who was born on Aug 8, 2005, will also miss the 2020 and 2021 editions unless the eligibility


requirement is changed.

But she is not concerned about missing the world championships, claiming that it will give her "more time to learn more and work on my jumps, skills and spins". AGENCY FRANCE-PRESSE, THE GUARDIAN, REUTERS

## Obituaries

FOR BOOKINGS AND ENQUIRIES, call 1800-289-9988 or 6319-5192

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want... and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." *Psalms 23*



**How Lim Keng**  
Age: 78

Was called home to be with the Lord on 26 January 2019. Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

*Pa, you brought us into the world, raised us, fed us, taught us to fish, showered us with your generosity, loved us... we will miss you dearly...*

Wife: Lim Joo Lan

<b>Sons:</b> Mickey How Dicky How Rickey How	<b>Daughters-in-law:</b> Gu Yiran Lyndee Leong
<b>Grandsons:</b> Ryan How Noah How Jonah How Cyrus How	<b>Granddaughter:</b> Astrid How

**And all relatives and friends.**  
Wake at Block 326 Tampines Street 32, Singapore 520326. Memorial service on Monday 28 January 2019 at 8.00pm. Cortège leaves on Tuesday 29 January 2019 at 2.00pm for Mandai Crematorium Hall 3 for cremation at 3.00pm.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." *Romans 8:28*



**Stella Ang Soh Lien**  
Age: 69

Was called home to be with the Lord on 26 January 2019. *She is dearly missed by her brothers and sisters, nephews, as well as everyone whose life she has touched.*

<b>Siblings:</b> Ang Soh Hoon Angela Peter Ang Ang Chan Hiang James Ang Chan Hwee Michael Ang Chan Leong Simon Ang Soo Ping Betty	<b>Spouses:</b> Nina Sumadi Jackie Lim Kenneth Chan
<b>Nephews:</b> Yap Ju-min Melvin, Yap Hsien-min Benedict, Joshua Ang, Ang Han-min, Jason Ang and Chan Xian Hui Paul	

**And all relatives and friends.**  
Wake is held at Block 38 Sin Ming Drive, Chapel of Light, #01-527, Singapore 575712. Night service on Tuesday 29 January 2019 at 8.00pm. Cortège leaves on Wednesday 30 January 2019 at 9.00am for Mandai Crematorium Hall 3 for cremation at 9.40am.



**Seng Thye Tuck @ Seng Tai Tak**  
Age: 89

Passed away peacefully on 26 January 2019. Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

Wives: Woo Lai Kum (deceased)  
Leong Lucy

<b>Sons:</b> Seng Siew Foong Seng Siew Phang	<b>Daughters-in-law:</b> Lau Woei Yuen Connie Wee
<b>Daughters:</b> Seng Peck Har Priscilla Seng Pick Waun Regina Seng Pick Hong Maria Seng Pick Fong Karen Seng Pick Luen Joanne Seng Pick Meng Mandy	<b>Sons-in-law:</b> Poon Jui Chiang Alex Ng Leong Poh Raymond Lee Seng Kian Jason Chong Kok Hock Abas Mutalib Jeff Thong

**Grandchildren & Grandson-in-law:**  
Ernest Seng Rong Qing, Hovan Seng, Stella Seng Hui Xiang, Cheryl Poon Shu Wen, Clara Poon Yi Ying, Shawn Poon Shi Cheng, Celine Poon Xin Yi, Ng Si Hui, Ng Yi Ling & Ong Weixiang Ryan, Lee Shi Hui Vivian, Lee Shi Hua Wenna, Lee Shi Chi Winnie, Lee Shi Pei Valerie, Clement Chong Jia Jie, Joey Chong Zu Er, Aandith Jami Abas, Andreas Aime Abas, Yuma Thong, Mia Thong, Mikayla Thong and James Thong

**And all relatives and friends.**  
Wake at Block 94A Whampoa Drive, Singapore 321094. Cortège leaves on Wednesday 30 January 2019 at 12.00pm for Mandai Crematorium Hall 3 for cremation at 1.00pm.



**Sivakamy Sivamoorthy**  
Age: 62

Passed away peacefully on 27 January 2019. Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

**Husband:**  
Suppayah s/o Nadason

**Children:**  
Sonniya Suppayah  
Amirtha Kavri Suppayah  
Vijayan Suppayah


**Spouses:**  
Sivakumar Palakrishnan  
Sanjay Prem

**Grandson:**  
Arya Prem

**Granddaughters:**  
Arti Prem  
Sai Akshaya Sivakumar

**And all relatives and friends.**  
Amma is resting at Skies Miltonia, 35 Miltonia Close, Singapore 768065. Cortège leaves on Monday 28 January 2019 at 5.30pm for Mandai Crematorium Hall 1 for cremation at 6.30pm.

"You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory." *Psalms 73:24*



**SU KHUN SIN**  
Age: 79


was called home to be with the Lord on 27 January 2019. Dearly missed and fondly remembered by family and loved ones.

**Wife:** Chua Seok Choo

<b>Son:</b> Su Peng Jiun	<b>Daughter-in-law:</b> Pu Jie
<b>Daughter:</b> Su Suat Mei	<b>Son-in-law:</b> Joseph Lee Chin Wai
<b>Grandsons:</b> Su Junhao Isaac Chan	<b>Granddaughter:</b> Su Xinyee

Wake is held at Singapore Funeral Parlours level 4 Lotus Hall 91 Tampines Link Singapore 528746. Night service will be held on Wednesday, 30 January 2019 at 8.00pm. Cortège will leave on Thursday, 31 January 2019 at 9.45am for Mandai Crematorium Hall 1 for cremation at 10.45am.

**Athma Shanthi Pooja The Family of the Late**



**R. Subramanian**  
Departed on 15 January 2019

Wish to express their heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all relatives and friends for their kind support during their recent bereavement.


**Karumathi Prayers** will be held on the night of Monday 28 January 2019 at 37 Simon Place, Singapore 545982.

**Athma Shanthi Prayers** will be held on Tuesday 29 January 2019 at 7.00pm at Sri Sivan Temple, 24 Geylang East Avenue 2, Singapore 389752.

**Please treat this as a personal invitation.**  
Tel: 6284 8526 / 8134 7696



"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." *Psalms 23:6*



**CHEONG ENG GUAN WILLIAM**  
Age: 55

was called home to be with the Lord on 26 January 2019. Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

**Wife:** Kan Pui Yan, Patricia  
**Daughter:** Cheong Jing Yin, Christine

<b>Father:</b> Cheong Kim Cheong (deceased)	<b>Mother:</b> Yong Lee Hua
<b>Brothers:</b> Cheong Eng Hoe, Clarence Cheong Eng Seng	<b>Sisters-in-law:</b> Wong Yeng Thow, Vanessa Simone Ng Saw Mooi
<b>Sister:</b> Cheong Chai Lian, Cindy	<b>Brother-in-law:</b> Ang Chee Leong, Michael
<b>Nephews:</b> Cheong Zhi Yu Cheong Jun Kai Cheong Jun Kiat Cheong Jun Meng	<b>Nieces:</b> Cheong Shu Qing Cheong Kai Lin Ang Gwendolyn Ang Alyn

Wake is held at 183A Jelebu Rd S'pore 671183 (Multi-Purpose Hall). Night services will be held on Monday & Tuesday, 28 & 29 January 2019 at 8.00pm. Cortège will leave on Wednesday, 30 January 2019 at 11.50am for Mandai Crematorium Hall 3 for cremation at 12.20pm.

**6th Anniversary**



**MRS PADMA RAJU**  
Departed: 28 January 2013

**You are always in our thoughts & we miss you very much**  
Fondly remembered by

**Husband:** K.M. Raju  
**Sister:** Dr Rajiswamy & host of relatives & friends

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF**

**K NAGARATNAM KALINGARAYAR**  
Departed on 28 January 2016

*You were the gem of our family,  
Your charming presence will still continue  
Life has never been the same since you left us,  
There is not a day that we do not think of you.  
We miss you a lot and you will remain in our  
loving hearts forever.....*

**Dearly missed and fondly remembered by**  
Beloved Wife: Mahalechimee A P  
Sons, Daughters, Sons-in law,  
Daughters-in-law, Grandchildren,  
Nephew, Nieces, Brothers-in-law, Sisters-in-law,  
Friends and Loved Ones

Find today's  
*obituaries*  
online

Death announcements in The Straits Times are now digitised to make it easier for the deceased's next-of-kin to share news of the demise of their loved one.

Find the online version of the obituaries published today at:  
**www.obits.sg/today**  
or scan the QR code.

To enquire about this service, please contact  
**+65 6319 5192.**





# life

**D** FAREWELL, LAN SHUI  
SSO's new  
conductor laureate  
**D7**



**Change your life today.  
Don't gamble on  
the future, act now,  
without delay.**

— Simone de Beauvoir

Live more.  
Bant less



## Food allergies are not to be sniffed at



**Some food allergies, though rare, can have severe consequences for people suffering from them**



**Joyce Teo**

Allergies are becoming more common around the world. Even the inhalation of cooking fumes can, in rare cases, trigger a reaction severe enough to kill.

Earlier this month in the United States, an 11-year-old boy, who was allergic to seafood, reportedly died after inhaling the fumes of cod fish being cooked.

Indeed, food allergens may become airborne or aerosolised during the cooking process, said Dr Elizabeth Tham, a consultant at the division of paediatric allergy, immunology and rheumatology at National University Hospital.

For instance, when a dish of shellfish is being cooked, a person who is allergic to the food may develop an allergic reaction to the airborne allergen upon inhalation of it.

The person is likely to be highly allergic to the particular food, said Dr Chong Yong Yeow, a specialist in rheumatology and consultant at Raffles Internal Medicine Centre.

"This means a small or trace

amount of the allergen (usually protein which triggers an allergic reaction) can lead to a reaction," he said.

But such allergies are rare.

An allergy happens when a person's body overreacts to something that is usually harmless by activating an immune response.

During the process, certain substances such as histamine are released, causing unpleasant symptoms such as itching, wheezing and swelling.

In severe cases, a life-threatening reaction called anaphylaxis can happen.

Most allergies are caused by allergens such as pollen, dust, animal dander and mould, as well as common food allergens such as peanuts, cow's milk, seafood and eggs.

The smell of food allergens is unlikely to trigger an allergic response. Neither are the fumes from cooking oil likely to trigger one, said Dr Chong.

It is the food allergens that can cause an allergic reaction. While reported cases of rare allergies are triggered by a shellfish allergy, all kinds of food can potentially release allergens in the air when they are being cooked openly, said Dr Chong.

"Sometimes it is very difficult to be sure which food particles (triggered the reaction), especially when many dishes are being cooked," he added.

In Singapore, where steamboat meals are gaining in popularity, some people may experience a blocked nose during the meal.

But it is unlikely to be triggered by an allergy to the fumes or food.

"I do not think it is the ingredients from the steamboat, for exam-

ple, prawns or shellfish, that trigger the blocked nose," said Dr Chong.

"A blocked nose can occur in a susceptible individual who has allergic rhinitis when exposed to hot steam. This is because the change in temperature can potentially irritate the nose."

Dr Tham said an allergic reaction typically includes an itchy skin rash and facial swelling, and, in more severe cases, difficulty in breathing or fainting.

Some people may experience a blocked nose and facial numbness, but she said these are not typical symptoms of an allergic reaction.

Some people have unusual allergies. Dr Tham has seen a patient develop anaphylaxis 20 minutes after she ate home-cooked fried fish coated with Japanese flour.

Another patient had similar life-threatening symptoms one hour after eating home-baked scones.

Both of them have a rare allergy

called the pancake syndrome, where allergic reactions occur in dust mite-allergic individuals after eating baked products made from flour contaminated with house dust mites.

"The prevalence is unknown and only occasional cases have been reported worldwide and in Singapore," said Dr Tham.

This syndrome, also known as oral mite anaphylaxis, occurs primarily in individuals who are allergic to dust mites and suffer from allergic rhinitis, asthma or both. They may also not be able to tolerate non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

Symptoms may include breathlessness, wheezing, eye or lip swelling, hives or fainting.

This allergy is difficult to diagnose as it may be mistaken for an allergy to wheat flour, said Dr Tham.

"A careful history as well as skin testing for wheat and dust mite allergy and even examination of the implicated flour may be required for a definitive diagnosis."

Dr Karen Choo, an associate consultant at the department of dermatology at Singapore General Hospital, said that many patients have sought help for their "unusual allergies".

However, on closer questioning and examination, the symptoms are suggestive of hives (urticaria) caused by chronic spontaneous urticaria in most cases, she said.

Hives are itchy, raised, reddish areas on the skin and about a quarter of the general population can have hives during their lifetime, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology.

"We would need to take a proper history - asking questions to clarify

what a patient means when he or she says 'I have an allergy'," Dr Choo said.

She added that there are certain tests available to help identify a trigger agent, such as skin-based patches or prick tests as well as blood tests.

If you suspect you have an allergy, it is best to take photos of the rashes as they may have changed by the time you see an allergist, she said.

Many people are able to recognise the symptoms of mild to moderate allergy: hives on the skin, lip or eye swelling, and may even self-medicate with antihistamines.

However, a minority of patients might progress to develop severe symptoms suggestive of anaphylaxis despite antihistamines.

"Please seek medical attention if there is eye or lip swelling accompanied by a sudden change in voice, hoarseness, throat tightness or breathlessness," advised Dr Choo.

"Less common symptoms include palpitations, vomiting, abdominal cramps or confusion."

In managing allergies, what you can do is to work with the doctor to identify possible triggers and take steps to avoid them.

"Sometimes, a patient might be issued an adrenaline auto-injector as a stop-gap measure should accidental exposure occur, resulting in a severe allergic reaction," said Dr Choo.

"It's important to seek medical attention after injecting adrenaline even if the person feels fine as there could be a second wave of symptoms after the initial allergic reaction."

joyceteo@sph.com.sg

**MORE on D2**

PHOTOS:  
ISTOCKPHOTO

**Please seek medical attention if there is eye or lip swelling accompanied by a sudden change in voice, hoarseness, throat tightness or breathlessness.**



**DR KAREN CHOO**, associate consultant at the department of dermatology at Singapore General Hospital



# Early exposure prevents allergies in babies

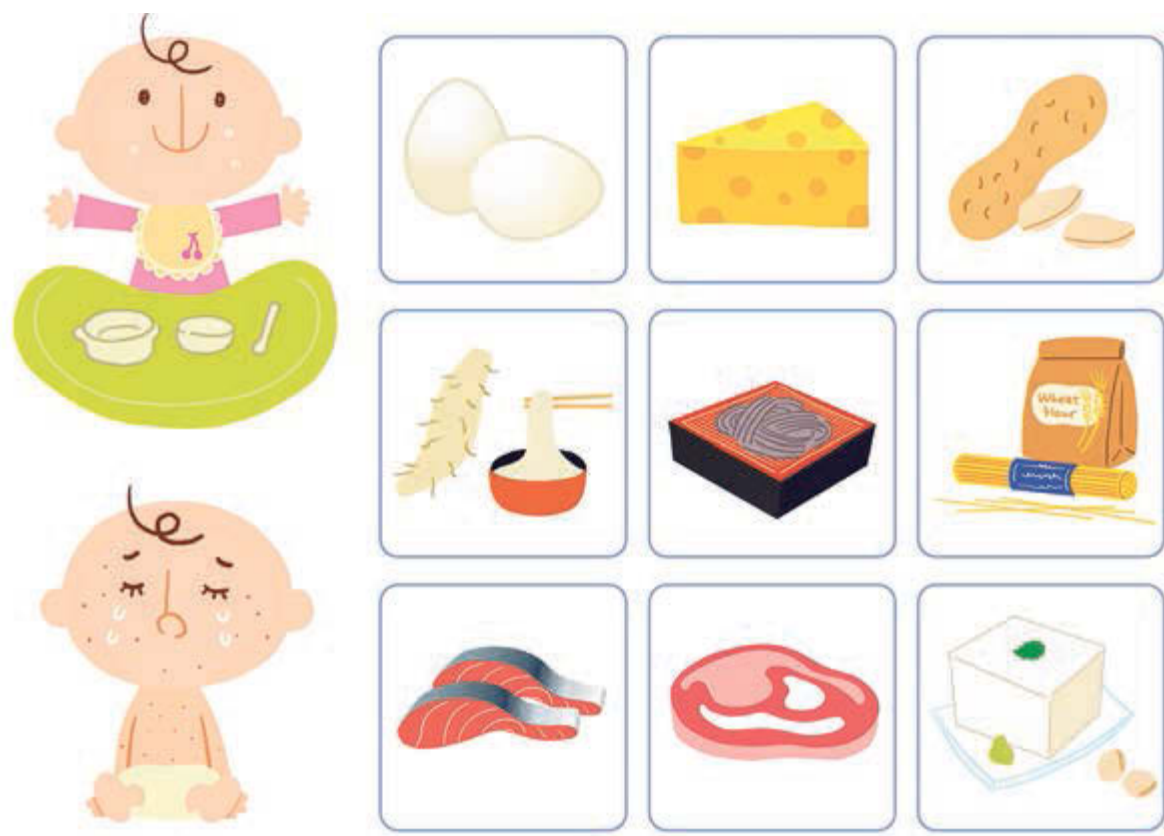


PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO

In the past, parents were told not to give their babies allergy-provoking foods till they were older. And as allergies tend to run in families, what some pregnant women did was to avoid consuming allergenic foods. But there has been a shift in thinking in recent years. Just last week, the Canadian Paediatric Society updated its food guidelines for babies at risk of allergies, saying that they should be offered common allergenic foods such as peanut butter and eggs at around six months old, but not before four months. Babies are considered at high risk of developing food allergy if they have a personal history of atopy,

such as eczema, or if they have a first-degree relative – such as a parent or sibling – with allergies, it said. In the United States, guidelines issued in early 2017 called for parents to give their children foods containing peanuts early in order to prevent peanut allergies. It said that babies can be given pureed food or finger food containing peanut powder or extract – but not whole peanuts or peanut bits – before they are six months old, and even earlier if a child is prone to allergies. Dr Elizabeth Tham, a consultant at the division of paediatric allergy, immunology and rheumatology at National University Hospital, ad-

vises the same. The introduction of solid foods, including allergenic foods such as eggs, peanuts and shellfish, should commence between four and six months of age and should not be delayed beyond six months of age, she said. “In fact, evidence suggests that delaying the introduction of foods, especially allergenic foods such as peanut and egg, may increase the

risk of developing food allergies,” she said. Also, the daily application of emollients or moisturisers on babies’ skin from birth may reduce the risk of developing eczema, which is a risk factor for the development of food allergies, she added. She encourages all mothers to breastfeed for at least six months and, if possible, up to one year.

Mothers and their infants should consume a well-balanced diet, with high amounts of fruit, vegetables and omega-3 fish oils, she said. “Pregnant mothers do not need to avoid any allergenic foods during pregnancy as there is no evidence that this reduces the risk of allergies in their children,” she added.

Joyce Teo

# Tech products help the elderly stay independent

LAS VEGAS • Good old times need not refer only to the past. With artificial intelligence to detect falls, virtual reality to combat isolation and “powered” clothing to assist the incapacitated, the tech world is

stepping up its effort to “disrupt” ageing. At the recent Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, exhibitors showcased new ways to help the elderly remain independent, mentally fit and connected. Some systems took a page from the gaming world of youngsters to help seniors “travel” to new places and connect with loved ones. “Everyone knows seniors get lonely, but that isolation can also lead to a lot of medical problems, including the acceleration of dementia,” said Mr Kyle Rand, founder of Rendezvous, a start-up which works with assisted living homes to give seniors a way to virtually visit remote locations. “They can stand atop the Eiffel Tower, they can go on an African safari or revisit their childhood home.”

Rendezvous was launched in a Washington, DC, tech incubator created by the American Association of Retired Persons, which in recent years has been funding efforts to develop new technologies for seniors. Other exhibitors touted technology that could help seniors remain in their homes, and give family members peace of mind by monitoring their condition, in some cases using predictive analytics to determine if they are at risk. Walabot, a wall-mounted monitoring system developed by Israeli start-up Vayyar, uses radio waves and three-dimensional imaging to keep tabs on seniors living alone. “You don’t need to wear anything, there are no cameras,” said Mr Ofer Familier, head of business development for Vayyar. The company, which makes a

range of sensor equipment, said Walabot could detect subtle changes in gait, movement or breathing which might signal a risk of a fall or other problem. “We can detect falls but the predictive aspect of it is to monitor changes in behaviour so we can alert family members,” Mr Familier said. Also launched at CES was the Addison Virtual Caregiver, a video-based assistant with a female avatar which can converse, offer reminders on medication and detect potential health issues. With the data gathered from the device, “we can classify people as high-risk or low-risk fallers”, said Mr David Keeley, research director for Addison parent firm SameDay Security. “We can predict the rate of functional decline.” Ms Alicia Mangram, a Phoenix-

based trauma surgeon who is an adviser to Addison, said the system can be useful in helping seniors remain independent. “Right now, when we send people home (from a hospital), we don’t know what happens to them,” she noted. “This allows us to check on them.” Tech firms see a promising market in these kinds of devices, with public attention focused by the Apple Watch’s feature of fall detection. According to research firm eMarketer, Americans of age 55 and older are the fastest-growing group of electronic wearable users in the United States, largely due to the devices’ enhanced health features. For those with mobility issues, California start-up Seismic unveiled its wearable tech body suit which can augment a user’s mus-

cles and help him maintain posture. The “core wellness suit”, which weighs under 2.3kg and can be worn under street clothes, has robotic components that provide up to 30 watts of power to each hip and lower back to support sitting, standing, lifting or carrying – similar to an exoskeleton but without the bulk. Ms Sarah Thomas, a Seismic vice-president and adviser to tech start-ups, said the new product is designed not only for the elderly but also for factory workers to ease fatigue and anyone with mobility issues. She said tech products for seniors should not be “stigmatised” with unsightly products. “We should be designing with age in mind, but without the ageist perspective,” she told a CES panel. AGENCY FRANCE-PRESSE

This page is done by SPH Marketing Division



## Nature's Way of keeping muscles, joints and bones functioning properly

Leading an active lifestyle keeps us in shape. However, engaging in physical activities could also subject our bones, joints and muscles to stress, and possibly fatigue and injury. Nature's Way has formulated products to keep these vital body parts in good condition through the triple benefits of recovery, relief and rebuilding. The Nature's Way Magnesium + Collagen Powder contains prime ingredients that are essential to bone, muscle and joint health. The Nature Way's Magnesium Gel can be applied before bedtime to provide relief from muscle soreness, stiffness and cramps. Nature's Way Magnesium + Collagen is available at leading pharmacies, personal care stores and department stores.



Mind & Body brings you a selection of health products and services to keep you in the pink of health.



## Prost-Aid™ offers a natural way of protecting prostate health

The prostate, a small gland located just below the bladder, is part of the male reproductive system. With age, prostate-related health issues including urinary problems may arise. Prost-Aid™, a dietary supplement from Q&N, has been specially formulated to support prostate health. It comprises three plant-based ingredients – Saw Palmetto Extract, Nettle and Pumpkin Seeds Extract – which are known for their efficacy in supporting urinary tract health and prostate functioning. Q&N products are available at all leading pharmacies and Chinese medical halls. Call 6745 0321 for more information.



## The New Moon Singapore Laksa Paste's a healthier option for laksa lovers

The next time you decide to dish up a laksa treat, reach for the New Moon Singapore Laksa Paste. It is not only a quick and easy way of creating this hot local favourite at home, but has been awarded the “Healthier Choice” symbol by Singapore's Health Promotion Board as well. Its traditional homemade recipe, comprising a proprietary blend of premium spices, herbs, dried shrimps and coconut milk, is lower in sugar and sodium, and does not contain preservatives, artificial colours and flavourings. New Moon Singapore Laksa Paste is available at selected Fairprice and Giant supermarkets islandwide.



## Fluimucil provides relief from discomforting cough and flu symptoms

Getting the flu and a cough is bad enough. Having your lungs and throat clogged with phlegm will make you feel downright miserable! Fluimucil can come to your rescue. This mucolytic agent helps alleviate irritating cough and flu symptoms without causing drowsiness. It works by breaking down the bonds in the thick and sticky mucus, which is not only the cause of congestion, but a breeding ground for bacteria as well. Fluimucil comes in 600mg dosages for adults and dissolvable granules in 100mg dosages for children. Fluimucil is now available for over-the-counter purchase at retail outlets, without the need for a doctor's prescription or visit to the pharmacist.



## SILS: A novel surgical technique applied via a single keyhole incision in the navel

Single Incision Laparoscopic surgeries (SILS) are increasingly commonplace due to the benefits they offer. Generally, there are reduced incidences of pain, scarring, wound-related complications and recovery downtime involved in such procedures. Dr Ravishankar K. Diddapur of The SILS Centre performs SILS through a small single incision in the umbilicus (belly button), as a result of which no visible scar is left behind. SILs can be used for a multitude of conditions, from appendectomies and gallstones to hernias, as well as more complex conditions like benign colon diseases and liver cysts. SILS procedures are available at Specialist Surgery Singapore at Gleneagles Hospital #02-35 (Tel: 6479 0608/ whatsapp: 9181 7293) and Singapore Scarless Laparoscopic Surgery at Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital #06-43 (Tel: 6334 0422).



# Exercise may keep memory sharp

**Studies zoom in on irisin, a hormone released during workouts which may boost brain health and reduce damage from dementia**

NEW YORK • Exercise control over brain wellness? A hormone released during exercise may improve brain health and lessen the damage and memory loss that occur during dementia, a new study finds.

The study, published this month in *Nature Medicine*, involved mice, but its findings could help to explain how, at a molecular level, exercise protects people's brains and possibly preserves memory and thinking skills, even in people whose pasts are fading.

Considerable scientific evidence already shows that exercise remodels brains and affects thinking. Researchers have shown in rats and mice that running boosts the creation of brain cells in the hippocampus, a part of the brain devoted to memory formation and storage.

Exercise can also improve the health and function of the synapses between neurons there, letting brain cells communicate better.

In people, epidemiological research shows that being physically active curbs the risk of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and may slow disease progression.

But many questions remain on just how exercise alters the inner workings of the brain and whether the effects are a result of changes elsewhere in the body that also happen to be good for the brain or whether the changes actually occur within the brain itself.



Those issues attracted the attention of an international consortium of scientists focused on preventing, treating and understanding Alzheimer's disease. Those concerns had brought a hormone called irisin into their sphere of interest.

Irisin, first identified in 2012 and named after Iris, the gods' messenger in Greek mythology, is produced by muscles during exercise. The hormone jump-starts multiple biochemical reactions in the body, most of them related to energy metabolism.

Because Alzheimer's disease is believed to involve, in part, changes

in how brain cells use energy, the scientists reasoned that exercise might be helping to protect brains by increasing levels of irisin there.

But if so, they realised, irisin would have to exist in human brains. To see if it did, they gathered tissues from brain banks and, via testing, found irisin there.

Gene expression patterns in the tissues suggested that much of this irisin was created in the brain itself.

Levels of the hormone were especially high in the brains of people free of dementia when they died, but were barely detectable in the brains of people who had died with Alzheimer's.

Those tests, however, though interesting, could not tell scientists what role irisin might be playing in brains. They turned to mice, some healthy and others bred to develop a rodent form of Alzheimer's.

They infused the brains of the animals bred to have dementia with a concentrated dose of irisin. Those mice soon began to perform better on memory tests and show signs of improved synaptic health.

At the same time, they soaked the brains of the healthy mice with a substance that inhibits production of irisin and then pumped in a form of beta amyloid, a protein that clumps together to form plaques in

the brains of those with Alzheimer's.

Without any irisin in their brains, the once-healthy mice soon showed signs of worsening memory and poor function in the synapses between neurons in the hippocampus.

The scientists also looked inside individual neurons from healthy mice and found that, when they added irisin to the cells, gene expression changed in ways that would be expected to lessen damage from beta amyloid.

Finally and perhaps most important, the scientists had healthy mice work out, swimming for an

Levels of the hormone irisin were especially high in the brains of people free of dementia when they died, but were barely detectable in the brains of people who had died with Alzheimer's.  
ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN

hour almost every day for five weeks. Beforehand, some of the animals were also treated with the substance that blocks irisin production.

In the untreated animals, irisin levels in the brain blossomed during the exercise training. Later, after their brains were exposed to beta amyloid, they seemed to fight off its effects, performing much better on memory tests than sedentary control mice that had been exposed.

But the animals that had been unable to create irisin did not benefit much from exercise. After exposure to beta amyloid, they performed about as poorly on memory tests as sedentary animals with beta amyloid in their brains.

Taken as a whole, these experiments suggest that exercise may protect against dementia in part by triggering an increase in the amount of irisin in the brain, said Mr Ottavio Arancio, a professor of pathology and cell biology at Columbia University.

He did the research along with 24 colleagues from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, Queen's University in Canada and other institutions.

But the experiments, although elaborate and multi-pronged, used mice and so cannot tell researchers if exercise and irisin will work similarly in people, or how much and what types of exercise might be best for brain health.

The results also do not show whether exercise and irisin can prevent Alzheimer's, but only that they seem to allay some of the effects of the disease in mice once it begins.

The scientists hope to soon test a pharmaceutical form of irisin as a treatment for dementia in animals and eventually people, especially those who have lost the ability to exercise, Mr Arancio said.

But for now, he said, the big lesson of the study would seem to be that "if you can, go for a walk".

NYTIMES

## Opting for hotels with yoga classes or personal trainers

NEW YORK • It was not the price, loyalty points or location that most influenced Ms Ruth Furman to book a stay at the Holiday Inn Express Waikiki in Honolulu last summer. It was the yoga.

Namely, the free poolside yoga every weekday morning.

Ms Furman, who makes fitness a priority at home, knew the yoga offering would increase the odds of working out during vacation too.

"Many times in the past, I have looked up nearby gyms or fitness classes only to do nothing," said Ms Furman, who lives in Las Vegas.

"This trip, I wanted to be intentional about making fitness classes a part of my vacation and didn't want to have to go out of my way."

It worked. "Since it was so convenient, it was a sure thing," she noted.

Not every Holiday Inn Express offers free daily yoga. Perks at individual hotels in the Intercontinental Hotel Group – which counts Holiday Inn Express among its brands – differ by property and that is true with most of the major chains.

But with a little searching, travellers can find a hotel that offers more than a cramped gym to help them stay on top of their workout routine – whether it is through yoga classes, connecting them with personal trainers or actually leading them on runs around town.

That is because the personalised fitness trend is gaining strength in a wide range of hotels, said Ms Deanna Ting, senior hospitality editor for Skift, a website that covers the business of travel through news and research.

In New York City, a business called Strength In Numbers (SIN) Workouts is available to send per-

sonal trainers to meet guests at the hotels it partners with, either in their rooms or hotel gym.

Other hotels have gone a step further and hired in-house personal trainers.

At Kimpton Glover Park Hotel in Washington, guests can work out in the gym with resident fitness expert Graham King, founder of Urban Athletic Club training facilities, and his team of personal trainers.

JW Marriott Chicago has a "Fit Squad" team of 10 elite trainers led by Mr Jason Raynor, a strength and performance coach.

The trainers lead classes in kickboxing, yoga, functional strength and conditioning, ropes and bells, bodyweight strength and conditioning, boxing, HIIT IT (which combines boxing with high-intensity drills) and something called "joga", described as "yoga for athletes".

Westin Hotels has also ramped up its fitness offerings. But perhaps its most ambitious offering is a "run concierge" programme, which can result in some serious calorie burning while doubling as a cardio-tourism adventure.

Around 250 of the run concierges at properties around the world lead regular group excursions of about 4.8km. The frequency and distance varies by location; at some hotels, guests can request a one-on-one run.

"We encourage you not to take your phone to experience and embrace the city that you're running in," said Mr Chris Heuveler, a Westin global run concierge.

"They'll take a picture of you and a landmark as opposed to you taking selfies. It just changes the experience and the game of running in a new city." WASHINGTON POST

Is phlegm making you feel congested? Fluimucil works fast to break down the phlegm and clears the lungs for easier breathing. Just dissolve, drink, and feel much better. Take Fluimucil for effective relief from phlegm due to cough or flu.

**FLUIMUCIL**  
WWW.FLUIMUCIL.SG



**sweetspot**  
Partner Content

By ARUL JOHN

Regardless of how healthily you normally eat, it is useful to have a careful plan during the coming festive season. Here are several healthy eating tips to get through the Chinese New Year and subsequent celebration periods.

**Plan your drinks**

Alcohol contains a lot of kilojoules, so set yourself an alcohol limit before arriving at a party or social function. A good strategy is to alternate alcohol with water, soda water or diet soft drinks.

Switch sugar sweetened drinks for diet options or water.

**Know your weakness**

Most of us have a soft spot for something sweet or salty.

Whatever your weakness, it might be best to not eat any at all, as stopping after you have had some may be harder than resisting altogether.

**Eat before the part**

If you arrive hungry to a function offering cocktail food, the temptation to eat lots of good food can be hard to resist!

The ideal option is to eat a healthy meal beforehand.

If you are eating at the party, look for lean protein-based choices such as meat balls, prawns, lean meat skewers, sushi or cold rolls.

**Two courses is plenty**

There's no need to miss out on delicious meals when eating at a restaurant.

A simple way to prevent caloric overload is to limit yourself to one to two courses, for example entrée and a main course, main courses and a side salad, or main course and dessert.

**Focus on lean protein and vegetables**

Instead of carbohydrate-heavy pasta, pizza and

rice-based dishes, select main meals that include protein-rich foods, salads or vegetables.

To avoid unhealthy fats, steer away from deep fried offerings such as chips, wedges, battered or crumbed fish or calamari, and schnitzels.

**Be smart about dessert**


If you fancy dessert, offer to share with someone, or look for fruit-based options.

*This article provides general information only and is not a substitute for medical advice. Please consult medical or healthcare professionals for advice on health-related matters.*

# Smart & healthy festive eating



Photo: iStock

aesthetic	specialist	specialist
<div><p><b>Services:</b> <b>Threadlift / Non Surgical Facelift</b> <b>Threadlift :</b> Cost from \$1,284.00 <b>Ulthera Face &amp; Neck :</b> Cost \$2,996.00 <b>Appointment : 6445 4545</b></p><p><b>DR BC NG AESTHETICS</b> Mon to Fri: 11am to 6pm Sat: 11am to 2pm 1 Goldhill Plaza #01-39 Singapore 308899 (Near Novena MRT) www.drbcng.com.sg</p></div>	<div><p><b>SINGAPORE SPORTS AND ORTHOPAEDIC CLINIC</b> Specialist Orthopaedic Surgeon and Consultant with special interest in Knee and Shoulder pain and Arthroscopy, Total knee replacement, Neck &amp; Back pain, Spine and disc problem, Elbow, Foot &amp; Ankle problem</p><p><b>#02-10/11/12 Gleneagles Medical Centre</b> 6 Napier Road, Singapore 258499, SMS/HP: 91377787</p></div> <div><p><b>SPECIALIST PAIN INTERNATIONAL CLINIC</b> <b>Dr Nicholas Chua Hai Liang, MBBS, MMed, Ph.D</b></p><p><b>Mount Elizabeth Novena Specialist Medical Centre</b> 38 Irrawaddy Road, #07-22/23, Singapore 329563 Tel: (65) 6339 1880 / 8511 2119</p></div> <div><p><b>SIOW NEUROLOGY</b> <b>HEADACHE &amp; PAIN CENTRE</b></p><p><b>Mount Alvernia Hospital, Medical Centre Blk. D, #08-59</b> 820 Thomson Road, Singapore 574623 Tel: 62545289</p></div>	<div><p><b>APPLE EYE CENTRE</b> <b>Dr. Yeo Kim Teck</b> Cataract, Glaucoma, Retinal Surgery, Diabetes Laser, Myopia Management, General Eye Screening and treatment</p><p><b>290 Orchard Road, #11-01, The Paragon Medical Centre</b> Tel: 6235 7000 / 8333 1101</p></div> <div><p><b>Dr GOH EYE SPECIALIST</b> <b>Adj. Assoc. Prof Goh Kong Yong</b> Cataracts, Lasers, Glaucoma, Diabetic Retinopathy, Double Vision, Floaters, Child Myopia, Blur Vision, Dry Eyes</p><p><b>Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital #07-37</b> 38, Irrawaddy Road, Singapore 329563 Tel: 6684 4140 / 9644 4830 (24 hr)</p></div> <div><p><b>WEETY ORTHODONTICS SPECIALIST CARE</b> <b>Dr Wee Teng Yau</b> Dental Braces, Invisalign, Permanent Retainers</p><p><b>TripleOne Somerset, 111 Somerset Road #04-15</b> Singapore 238164 Tel: 6732 3722 WhatsApp: 9756 6952 Email: smile@wosc.com.sg</p></div>
<div><p><b>RADIANT MEDICAL &amp; AESTHETIC CENTRE</b> Laser/ IPL Skin Rejuvenation, HIFU Treatment, Radiofrequency Skin Tightening, Pigmentation, Acne &amp; Acne Scar, Hair Removal, Botox, Fillers, Tattoo Removal, Chemical Peeling, Weight Loss Management.</p><p><b>Blk 810 Hougang Central #01-220 Singapore 530810</b> Tel: 6881 2389</p></div>	<p>For advertising enquiries, please contact <b>Augustin Ma 9833 2842</b> or <b>myma@sph.com.sg</b></p>	



FitAndFab

# Dedicated to lifting weights

Nurse Muhammad Subhi Ismani makes it a point to work out before or after his shifts

Joyce Teo

**What is your secret to looking fabulous?**  
I would think it is commitment, consistency and discipline. Without any of these, you can never achieve your goals.

**Has there ever been a time when you were not fit and fab?**  
In primary school, I was put on the Trim and Fit (TAF) programme. When my classmates were at assembly, I would be running around the basketball court with the other obese children. When I enlisted in national service, I was assigned to the obese batch. I lost 20kg and told myself to not stop there.

**What is your diet like?**  
I eat a balanced diet by consuming enough protein, carbohydrates and fats to maintain my active lifestyle. My three meals consist of beef, fish or chicken, with vegetables and brown rice. My wife prepares my food when she is free. Otherwise, I cook my own meals instead of eating out. I do not use a lot of salt or sugar.

**What are your indulgences?**  
I love eating pizza and going for buffets. I eat in moderation and have cheat meals once a week to satisfy my cravings.

**How do you maintain a healthy work-life balance?**  
As a nurse, I work shifts. I either train before or after my shift. I try to get at least six hours of sleep every day.

**What are the three most important things in your life?**  
My faith, my family and my health.

**What is your favourite part of your body?**  
I guess my stronger feature would be my shoulders. I think that I need to work more on my arms.

**What must you always do before and after a workout?**  
Before a workout, I must have a kopi o kosong peng (iced black coffee). After that, I must have a meal.

**How important is it for you to keep up with your fitness routine?**  
It helps to boost my self-confidence and keeps me more alert, which allows me to perform better at work. Even when I do not get enough sleep, I do not use that as an excuse to skip training. I would instead take a short nap after work to recharge prior to working out.

**How has your active lifestyle influenced your family and friends?**  
They are surprised at how much I have transformed my body over the years. Some of them have joined me at the gym, but they gave up after a few months because of work or family commitments. My colleagues ask me about my training, but not many of them are willing to go through it. My wife joins me regularly at the gym when she can as she prefers to lift weights than do yoga or zumba. However, she is taking a break as she is recovering from her pregnancy.

**Would you go for plastic surgery?**  
Never. I am thankful to God for what he has given me.

**Do you think you are sexy?**  
I think I am all right.

joyceteo@sph.com.sg

## BioBox

MUHAMMAD SUBHI ISMANI

AGE: 32  
HEIGHT: 1.65m  
WEIGHT: 76kg

He has received martial arts training since he was young, picking up silat at nine and ju-jitsu at 17. But he was also an obese child. Things changed when he entered national service. He lost 20kg and has since endeavoured to keep off the weight. In 2015, he stopped martial arts training after he fractured his ankle and injured his right knee. He then started lifting weights to strengthen his core muscles. The Singapore General Hospital staff nurse said he fell in love with lifting weights and went on to take part in local weightlifting competitions. Occasionally, he teaches ju-jitsu to adults and children at the Jujitsu Association of Singapore, where he received his training. His wife is a staff nurse at Sengkang General Hospital. The couple have a 13-month-old son and a two-month-old daughter.



Mr Muhammad Subhi Ismani says his fitness routine boosts his self-confidence and keeps him alert at work.  
ST PHOTO: KHALID BABA

## Fitness routine

<b>Monday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1hr chest and tricep workout</li><li>• 30min brisk walk</li></ul>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1hr back and bicep workout</li></ul>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1hr shoulder workout</li><li>• 30min brisk walk</li></ul>
<b>Thursday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1hr leg workout</li></ul>
<b>Friday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1hr arm workout</li></ul>
<b>Saturday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1hr hamstring workout</li><li>• 30min brisk walk</li></ul>
<b>Sunday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rest</li></ul>

Source: MUHAMMAD SUBHI ISMANI  
STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

## Love in 200 words

This Valentine's Day, The Straits Times invites you to tell us a love story in miniature

Send us a story about love – true, imagined, funny, sad, yours, anybody's – in 200 words, 200 being the magic number this Bicentennial year. We will publish the best entries on Feb 10.

- All entries must be 200 words or fewer.
- The Straits Times reserves the right to curate, edit and publish the entries at its discretion.
- Entries should not contain profanity or graphic language.

Send your entry to [stlife@sph.com.sg](mailto:stlife@sph.com.sg) by Jan 31 with "LOVE STORY" in the e-mail subject line, along with the following details:

- Your full name as in your NRIC
- Your date of birth
- Your mobile phone number
- Your e-mail address



## ASK THE EXPERTS

sweet spot  
Partner Content

Brought to you by



# What to do if you get food poisoning



Seek medical assistance if you have persistent abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea or high fever.  
PHOTO: ISTOCK

**Q** How do I know if I have food poisoning? Can I self-medicate or should I consult a doctor?

**A** Food poisoning occurs when you eat something that contains harmful bacteria or toxins. Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain and/or fever.

The symptoms are similar to those of viral gastroenteritis (stomach flu), which is caused by viruses transmitted through direct or indirect contact with an infected person.

If multiple people fall ill simultaneously after eating food from a common source, food poisoning is the likely case.

### When to consult a doctor

Young children, the elderly and those with chronic illnesses (such as diabetes, kidney and heart disease) are more vulnerable and should be assessed by a doctor early.

If you have persistent vomiting, seek medical assistance. In such cases, adequate oral rehydration is not possible, so you may be given medication via injection or intravenous drip.

Severe diarrhoea can also result in dehydration if you do not drink enough fluids.

Signs of dehydration include a dry tongue, sunken eyes, concentrated urine (dark yellow), decreased urination, giddiness or near fainting episodes, and marked lethargy.

If you have high fever, diarrhoea or abdominal pain that does not improve after a few days, get a doctor to assess if antibiotics or referral to a hospital is required.

When in doubt, it is safer to consult a doctor.

### Stay hydrated

Self-medicating may be appropriate if symptoms are mild and improve with medication.

If you feel nauseous or have mild vomiting but can still retain fluids orally, drink small amounts at frequent intervals, for example, half-a-cup every 15 to 30 minutes.

Try not to drink only water as it does not provide any electrolytes or calories.

You can alternate plain water with fluids such as barley water, rice water, diluted juice, clear soup, diluted milk (for babies and young children) or oral rehydration solutions.

If you have diabetes, monitor your blood sugar level a few times a day and consider omitting a dose of medication if you have poor appetite and your sugar level is not high.

Those with kidney or heart disease, and who are on a strict

fluid-restricted diet, should consult a doctor as close monitoring is needed and home management may not be feasible.

### Dietary advice

During the acute phase of illness, a bland diet is recommended and can be introduced slowly if you have not vomited after a few hours of oral rehydration.

Suitable foods include:

- bread or toast,
- biscuit,
- porridge,
- steamed fish or chicken,
- soup, or
- mashed potato.

If you can keep your food down, gradually return to a normal diet over 12 to 24 hours.

### Watch what you eat

To reduce the risk of food poisoning, try to eat from reputable food establishments as much as possible.

If you suspect you have food poisoning, consider alerting the National Environment Agency, so its officers can investigate.

Dr Oh Jen Jen



Head and consultant, 24hr Clinic and Emergency Services, Mount Alvernia Hospital



# Singaporean in Rave Now finals

**Jasmine Sokko, an electronic music singer-songwriter, has made it to the finals of the Chinese reality competition**

Jan Lee

Home-grown electronic music singer-songwriter Jasmine Sokko may have trouble passing her university modules in Sweden, but at least she has a good reason.

The 23-year-old is the only Singaporean and one of six acts to make it to the finals of Chinese reality competition programme Rave Now – a show focusing on electronic music production. The show is in its first season.

Local DJ Kofflow and beatboxer Dharni Ng, who teamed up to appear on the show were booted off earlier in the series, which began airing online on Chinese streaming site Tencent Video last month.

From late August to this month, Sokko, a fourth-year Singapore Management University student, had to fly between Shanghai for filming and Stockholm, where she is on a six-month exchange programme.

“I’m graded on attendance, so I don’t think I’m going to pass,” says Sokko candidly during an interview with The Straits Times while she was in Singapore earlier this month.

Known for obscuring most of her face with a visor during public appearances, Sokko, who had never been to China before the show, gained a solid following of Chinese fans with renditions of her original songs such as 1057 (2016), which were modified for the show with new Chinese lyrics.

Speaking of her entry into the vast Chinese market, Sokko says: “It’s a very interesting market and electronic music is still relatively new there. I want to break in and explore what the scene is like.”

The biggest difference between the Singapore and Chinese market so far? The feedback she is getting.

Sokko says: “When I release something here, I might get some likes and a few comments. But in China, there are so many comments. If you

sing something, people will give advice, praise, criticise or even recount personal stories that they felt the song reminded them of. So I feel my existence as an artist more intensely over there, but, of course, when people don’t like you or your performances, the hate is more acute too.”

The Chinese-language medium is also a departure for Sokko, who has produced largely English language content since her debut in 2016.

“It’s really great that my mentor is Lay Zhang, because he’s a big advocate of mixed Mandopop, which means that songs don’t have to be completely in Chinese, it can be 50-50,” says Sokko.

Zhang, a popular Chinese singer and member of famed South Korean boyband Exo, is one of three regular mentors on the show.

“I didn’t know much about him before filming, but my respect for him has increased exponentially since we began filming,” says Sokko.

“At his level, he can afford to hire people to do music for him. But he wants to do everything on his own. I’ve learnt a lot from him.”

And Sokko is not Zhang’s only new fan – her mother is too.

“My mum doesn’t just watch episodes of the show with me in it. She watches it for Lay,” says Sokko, who added that her mother will be flying up to watch her film the live broadcast of the show’s finals, slated to air on Friday.

“My parents have become more open-minded in the years since my debut. They’re traditional parents; they were worried that music as a career won’t be stable. But they’ve become more supportive as my career grew.”

Is she confident of being the last man standing on Friday then?

Sokko, who admits that she is not certain of her chances, says: “It’s challenging, but I’ll give it my best shot.”

And if her best shot fails to crown her as the winner of Rave Now, Sokko has at least one valuable takeaway: “My ability to speak Mandarin has definitely improved.”

janlee@sph.com.sg

• The finals of Rave Now will be broadcast live on Feb 1, 8pm, on Tencent Video at v.qq.com.



Jasmine Sokko, who obscures most of her face with a visor during public appearances, has gained a solid following of Chinese fans with renditions of her original songs such as 1057. ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG

# Movie on Weinstein shown at Sundance

PARK CITY (United States) • For more than 20 years, Harvey Weinstein reigned supreme as rainmaker at the Sundance Film Festival, spending millions to buy up the best in independent cinema.

Now he is back, but in a film detailing his downfall that gives voice to his many sexual assault accusers.

Untouchable, directed by Ursula Macfarlane, makes no claim to offer new revelations. Rather, it attempts to retrace, as rigorously and scrupulously as possible, the talent and decadence of one of the most powerful men in Hollywood – a man who now awaits trial on charges of rape and sexual aggression.

The Sundance Film Festival, once Weinstein’s favourite hunting ground, presented the film’s world premiere over the weekend, just hours after showing Leaving Neverland, a four-hour documentary featuring two young men who said that, as children, they were sexually abused by Michael Jackson.

Weinstein’s alleged victims are also at the heart of Untouchable. Whether unknown starlets or A-listers, they describe what they say were the abuses, threats and insatiable sexual appetite of Weinstein as he acted without restraint.

Among them is actress Rosanna



The movie Untouchable, about film mogul Harvey Weinstein who is charged with sexual aggression, is directed by Ursula Macfarlane (far left, with actress Rosanna Arquette, one of the alleged victims). Also at the Sundance Film Festival were Naomi Watts (right) at The Wolf Hour premiere and Emma Roberts (far right) at the Paradise Hills debut. PHOTOS: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Arquette, one of the first women to publicly accuse the producer, in an article by reporter Rogan Farrow in The New Yorker magazine.

“It was time,” she told Agence France-Presse on the “black carpet” of the film’s premiere. “We were seeing more and more abuse, such abuse of power of a powerful man who can destroy lives in a flash. So it was time.”

Arquette said people were beginning to talk about abuse even before the Weinstein scandal erupted in public. “You had the women of Bill Cosby and they came out before us, so they spoke. And then we came out,” she added.

“Apparently because a lot of us were famous actresses, people

went ‘What?’ And then it started something so huge and now it is a movement across the world – everywhere, India, Africa, everywhere.”

Macfarlane was contacted by producers about making Untouchable shortly after the New York Times and New Yorker published their sensational revelations about Weinstein in October 2017.

She immediately said yes. Macfarlane did not know Weinstein, but feels she knows his type well.

“To be honest, when I read these stories, it didn’t surprise me because, of course, I know about lots of other men’s behaviour, alleged behaviour, in these spheres,” she said.

What did shock her was learning at the extent of the allegations and realising there were “layers of complicity within the industry” protecting Weinstein.

“Women were trying to talk about this for decades, they were trying to talk about it and break the story and they just couldn’t do it, you know, because everyone was frightened,” she said.

“So I think that level of power and fear that he seemed to be able to generate, that shocked me.”

Fifteen months after the original “earthquake”, Arquette believes it is time for men to engage more actively and draw a line, once and for all, on the sordid ways of pre-Weinstein Hollywood.

“I think people are looking at their watches – ‘When is this gonna end?’ – the men especially. But the thing is, this is not an attack on men,” she said.

“There are many incredible men and those men need to stand up and treat women with respect. It’s a paradigm shift. It’s not going to work the other way anymore – it’s not.”

Macfarlane, too, sees the change as irreversible.

“Consciousness is definitely changing and I think the world of Harvey Weinstein is not going to be the same. I do believe that.

“But it might not change as quickly as we all would like. “That’s the issue.”

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



# SSO's new conductor laureate

The title is given to Lan Shui as he steps down as the Singapore Symphony Orchestra's music director after 22 years of service

Akshita Nanda  
Arts Correspondent

Chinese-American conductor Lan Shui has laid down his baton as music director of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra (SSO), but the orchestra has named the 61-year-old its conductor laureate to honour his 22 years of service.

The announcement was made last Saturday before Shui conducted the SSO, the Singapore Symphony Chorus & Youth Choir and several other choruses in a performance of Mahler's Resurrection Symphony at the Esplanade Concert Hall.

He told The Straits Times ahead of the performance that the symphony was chosen to mark the end of his period at the helm of the orchestra, but also to anticipate its future. "Mahler writes about death as a wonderful life passage. This second symphony describes the end of



Lan Shui (far left) with Mr Goh Yew Lin, chairman of the Singapore Symphony Group, at the conductor's farewell concert. PHOTO: SINGAPORE SYMPHONY GROUP

a phase; death is one phase and beyond that is yet another – the 'resurrection', so to speak."

He added: "This concert is also a celebration of 22 years with the orchestra, with the audience, with everyone in Singapore."

The title of conductor laureate is honorary and Shui will not have an advisory role with the orchestra, though Mr Goh Yew Lin, chairman of the Singapore Symphony Group, said: "We look forward to working with him as an honoured guest conductor for many years to come."

Shui was first invited to conduct the SSO in 1993 by its founding music director Choo Hoey and became its music director in January 1997. Under his tenure, the orchestra has attracted well-known soloists such as cellist Yo-Yo Ma, and iconic conductors such as Russia-born Vladimir Ashkenazy and Shui's own mentor, Estonia-born maestro Neeme Jarvi. The SSO has also performed at the well-known BBC Proms music festival in 2014 and given several successful overseas tours.

Shui, who is a Singapore perma-

nent resident, is giving up his post at the SSO to spend more time in Denmark with his wife and two sons, aged 13 and three.

Mr Goh of the Singapore Symphony Group board added: "Lan Shui has in his quiet but determined way built an orchestra that all Singaporeans can be proud of. He has been friend and mentor to the musicians of the SSO and has inspired a whole generation of musicians and music lovers over the past 22 years. The board unanimously voted to confer the title of conduc-

tor laureate to acknowledge his dedication and his achievements as the SSO's music director and also to commemorate our continuing friendship."

Shui says: "It's a great honour for me to be conferred the title of SSO conductor laureate. It's been an amazing 22 years and the farewell concerts were so emotional for me. I have so much love for this orchestra and this title reflects a continuation of our warm and close friendship."

akshitan@sph.com.sg

## Lan Shui's unforgettable farewell concert

### REVIEW/CONCERT

#### LAN SHUI'S FAREWELL

Singapore Symphony Orchestra – Lan Shui (conductor)  
Miah Persson (soprano)  
Anna Larsson (mezzo-soprano)  
Singapore Symphony Chorus & Youth Choir  
Hallelujah Chorus  
Singapore Bible College Community Choir, Cantorum  
The Choir of the Transylvania State Philharmonic  
The Philharmonic Chamber Choir, Singapore  
Eudence Palaruan (choral director)  
Wong Lai Foon (choirmaster)  
Esplanade Concert Hall  
Last Saturday

Mervin Beng

In the world of classical music, the change of music director or principal conductor is a major milestone. For the Singapore Symphony Orchestra (SSO), which just marked its 40th anniversary a week ago, it is a momentous occasion, as Lan Shui is only its second music director and leaves after a tenure of more than two decades.

Few music lovers would have been surprised that Shui chose Gustav Mahler's epic Second Symphony (Resurrection) for this farewell concert. Over the years, he has moulded the SSO into an orchestra that excels in the late Romantic repertoire and Saturday night's performance was a tour de force.

At the time Shui took over the reins of the SSO in 1997, its performance home was the Victoria Concert Hall (VCH), with vastly inferior acoustics to what is heard there today after the hall's extensive 2014 renovation. Ground-laying for the

Esplanade –Theatres by the Bay complex had just taken place and the SSO was a respectable but unremarkable small Asian orchestra.

The orchestra was already attracting high-calibre guest artists and had the knack of spotting future stars on the cusp of their breakthroughs. What remained frustrating for the symphonic enthusiast was that the orchestra's sound seemed to vary from week to week. This was not helped by the fact that the undersized VCH often made listening to large orchestral works uncomfortably loud.

The orchestra's adaptation to the vastly superior Esplanade Concert Hall was not achieved overnight. Along with its excellent balance and supportive acoustics, the larger hall placed greater demands on orchestral timbre, balance and clarity, all of which Shui and his musicians worked hard to master.

On Saturday evening, the heady

potion of adrenaline, passion, melancholy and hard toil brought forth a performance of Mahler's Resurrection Symphony that eclipsed the SSO's 2014 BBC Proms performance of Rachmaninov's Second Symphony by some margin.

The beauty and depth of sound, the precision, Shui's trademark shaping of long romantic lines made the 85-minute performance moving and unforgettable.

Even with almost twice the usual number of winds in the orchestra, the ensemble was superb, with brilliant trombone, trumpet and horn solos.

The Singapore Symphony Chorus proved to be stars this evening, helming a combined choir that provided 11 ecstatic minutes of choral pianissimo through fortissimo.

The statuesque mezzo-soprano Anna Larson sang with such power and depth in the final two movements that many present might

have believed that she was wearing a hidden microphone.

Through the evening the only minor weaknesses were some loss of tautness in the fourth movement and Miah Persson, whose otherwise fine soprano solos tended to be overshadowed by the orchestra and chorus.

The huge, glorious climax drew enthusiastic applause and an extended standing ovation.

Over the quarter century since his first guest appearance with the SSO, Shui's youthful looks and slim build have remained largely intact. His boundless energy has not waned, even through periods of convalescence from injury.

His contribution to classical music has been immense and it is fitting that the Board of the Singapore Symphony Group has bestowed on him the title of conductor laureate.

Farewell, Lan Shui. Thanks for all the great music.

## Josh Groban promises fun at his concert

Eddino Abdul Hadi  
Music Correspondent

American singer Josh Groban made his name through classical crossover hits such as 2003's You Raise Me Up and 2006's You Are Loved (Don't Give Up).

But if you think his upcoming first show in Singapore at The Star Theatre on Feb 25 will be a staid and sombre affair, the singer with the distinctive tenor and baritone voice is eager to prove you wrong.

"It's important that it be fun," he says in a recent telephone interview from New York. "I think sometimes I sing some sad songs, or some very serious songs, and so people assume that if they are coming to my concert, that it's only going to be serious. You have to have the light with the dark, you have to have humour."

He is very keen on engaging in banter during his Singapore concert, which will feature a full orchestra and choir, and there will be a lot of stories about the background of his songs, he promises. The audience will not hear them as they sound in his recordings as he finds ways to make them more "energetic" for the large venues that he sings in.

"People come to the show and bring somebody who didn't want to come and they're surprised by how much fun they have and that's always a good feeling."

The 37-year-old was first noticed when he stood in for classical star Andrea Bocelli and sang with Celine Dion at the 1999 Grammy Awards



American singer Josh Groban got noticed when he stood in for classical star Andrea Bocelli and sang with Celine Dion at the 1999 Grammy Awards rehearsals. PHOTO: BRIAN BOWEN SMITH

line Dion at the rehearsals for the 1999 Grammy Awards. That stint led to an appearance on the popular Rosie O'Donnell talk show, which in turn led to a cameo on legal drama-comedy Ally McBeal (1997 to 2002). He released his self-titled debut album in 2001.

In Groban's eighth and newest album Bridges, released last year, he pays tribute to the two veteran singers who helped kickstart his show-business career.

Bocelli sings with him on a new duet that he co-wrote, We Will Meet Once Again, while he covers Dion's 1998 tune, S'il Suffisait D'aimer (If It Were Enough To Love).

"Celine was the reason I had a career because I was asked to sing with her early on in my life."

Groban co-wrote nine of the 12 songs in the new album, which also includes a cover of the iconic 1970 song Bridge Over Troubled Water by folk duo Simon & Garfunkel.

He first sang it in a concert with its original singer and songwriter Paul Simon back in 2008 and has since included it as part of his concert setlist, but it was only recently that he decided to make a recording of his interpretation.

"The world we are in is so divided and I felt it was necessary to sing songs of togetherness and hope. These are the songs that I feel need

to be recorded right now."

Besides Ally McBeal, Groban has also dabbled in some high-profile acting gigs in the last few years.

He made his Hollywood debut in 2011 with romantic comedy Crazy, Stupid, Love and acted in the 2016 to 2017 run of Broadway musical Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet Of 1812.

Last year, he starred opposite television veteran Tony Danza in Netflix comedy-drama The Good Cop.

"I love acting, I was in theatre at school before I got signed to my record deal, so any time I get to tell a story through a character's eyes is really fun for me and different than singing. (But) music is always No. 1."

#### BOOK IT / JOSH GROBAN BRIDGES TOUR

WHERE: The Star Theatre, 1 Vista Exchange Green

WHEN: Feb 25, 8pm

ADMISSION: \$108 to \$328 from Sistic. Go to www.sistic.com.sg or call 6348-5555

**ITSHOW**  
CONNECTING YOU TO TECHNOLOGY IN 2019  
**7-10 MARCH**  
SUNTEC SINGAPORE  
LEVEL 3, 11AM-12PM • LEVELS 4 & 6, 12-3PM

**SELL YOUR TECH PRODUCTS & SERVICES**

Up to **600,000** expected visitorship

Marketing Campaign worth up to **\$800,000**  
(Newspapers / Magazine / Radios / Outdoor Media / Facebook / Digital Media and others)

Organized by **Exhibits Inc**

**BOOK YOUR SPACE NOW!**

Call **6747 4620**  
or Email to [sales@exhibitsinc.com.sg](mailto:sales@exhibitsinc.com.sg)  
[fb.com/ComexITShow](http://fb.com/ComexITShow)

**健康保健展 health +2 FESTA**  
FREE Admission 入場免費  
Health • Wellness • Nutrition

**3 Generations Under ONE 三代同堂ROOF**

**3-5 MAY 2019**  
Suntec Convention Halls 403 – 405  
新达城展览中心403 – 405展厅  
11am – 8pm (Fri – Sun, 星期四 – 星期日)

**BOOK YOUR SPACE NOW!**  
\*Limited booths available\*

**Ms Kelen Koh**  
9762 2027 | [kelenkoh@sph.com.sg](mailto:kelenkoh@sph.com.sg)  
**Ms Marie Yeo**  
9699 9339 | [marieyeo@sph.com.sg](mailto:marieyeo@sph.com.sg)  
**Ms Adeline Goh**  
9681 6289 | [gohtna@sph.com.sg](mailto:gohtna@sph.com.sg)

For more information, visit [www.healthfesta.sg](http://www.healthfesta.sg)  
[sghhealthfesta](https://www.facebook.com/sghhealthfesta) [sghhealthfesta](https://www.instagram.com/sghhealthfesta)

Organized by **sphere** **AN sgh EVENT**





Sohee (far left) and Sunye (second from left) parted ways after seven years with Wonder Girls, which had the mega-hit Nobody. The group has since disbanded. Sohee, now a singer-actress, had a role in zombie flick Train To Busan (2016). Sunye, who is married with children, is planning a comeback to showbusiness. ST FILE PHOTO



Jessica also left Girls' Generation in the seventh year. She is now focusing on a solo career in acting and singing.



Sojin, leader of nine-year-old quartet Girl's Day, shocked fans when she gave notice to leave the Dream T Entertainment label. Her contract expires next month. PHOTOS: TNP FILE, LIANHE ZAOBAO

# Why K-pop girl groups don't last

**Their shelflife is curtailed by the 'seven-year curse' as competition from younger groups exacts a toll**

SEOUL • Earlier this month, Sojin of South Korean girl group Girl's Day gave notice to leave the Dream T Entertainment label. Her contract expires next month.

Fans reacted in shock, with many questioning whether this was the beginning of the end of the nine-year-old quartet, which had survived the notorious "seven-year curse" that dogs idol acts in Korea.

The industry, reported The Korea Herald, has an unwanted record of idol groups breaking up or losing a member at that point in time.

The casualties include 2NE1, 4Minute and Sister which disbanded after seven years.

It was also in the seventh year that Jessica left Girls' Generation, while Sunye and Sohee also parted ways with Wonder Girls.

Unlike boybands, which often stay the course for a longer period despite disruptions from members reporting for mandatory military service, few girl groups can stand the test of time. Industry-watchers said competition from younger groups exacts a toll.

"Considering the average age of girl groups and the plethora of groups making debuts every year, once the group hits a certain age, its popularity tends to wane," said Mr Lee Taek-gwang, a culture critic and professor of global communication at Kyung Hee University.

"This is especially the case for girl groups as many became popular because of their cute, young and innocent image. But once the girls mature, that image is hard to maintain and they are replaced by younger groups."

With few exceptions, female K-pop stars are 20 or younger when they enter the scene.

While boyband members tend to make their debut at similar ages, they have a longer career runway.

Examples include 20-year-old Shinhwa, 14-year-old Super Junior, 13-year-old Big Bang and 11-year-old SHINee.

The short shelflife of a successful girl band – usually no more than five to seven years – means that members have to find other ways to stay in the spotlight.

Vocalists tend to break away and go solo, as seen in the cases of Bada of S.E.S., Lee Hyori of Fin.K.L., HyunA of 4Minute, Sunmi of Wonder Girls, Hyorin of Sister and CL of 2NE1.

Many of these singers thrive in their solo ventures on the strength of their vocal skills and the staunch support from loyal fans.

Another popular diversion is acting. Girl's Day members Hyeri and Minah, for example, have both built successful acting careers.

The infamous "seven-year curse" also coincides with the time when most girl band members reach their mid-to-late 20s.

The seventh year is also when most contracts expire, in line with a 2009 rule from the Fair Trade Commission stipulating that contracts between artists and agencies cannot exceed seven years.

Beyond that benchmark, the artists can decide whether to renew or leave. Often, one or two band members can get better terms from

another label – one reason many girl groups call it a day.

"If a girl group reached its peak within three to five years of its debut, the agencies try their best to renew contracts in the second round, giving better profit distribution to popular members individually," an industry insider said.

"Due to the profit gap, some members decide to leave the agency or find better offers with other labels, causing the band to separate."

But boy groups tend to stay together because the members are aware they are better off together, with larger fan bases to tap for concerts and sales of albums and merchandise, Mr Lee added.

There are girl groups with large fan bases, such as Girls' Generation and Twice, but even their fandoms fall behind those of boy groups in terms of size, money spent and devotion.

Even if they disband, the boy-band might still decide to make a surprise comeback.

Which is what g.o.d is doing, coming out with a 20th anniversary album and holding concerts for fans that have pledged allegiance to the group since 1999.

Exclusively for The Straits Times subscribers

## Win a trip for two to mystical Shangri-La, Yunnan, valued at \$10,000



The Hidden Valley Resort is the first glamping (glamorous camping) boutique resort in Shangri-La, Yunnan. Located in a stunning Tibetan enclave in China's last frontier, the resort offers a truly unique travel experience. Besides glamping under the stars, you get to soak up Tibetan culture, hike, ride a horse, enjoy farm-to-table cuisine and venture to less-travelled places with a bespoke itinerary.

The incredible six-day-five-night package for two, valued at \$10,000, includes airfare, accommodation, three meals a day, guided activities and transportation such as airport transfers. Rejuvenate yourself, experience the essence of Tibetan life and create memories of a lifetime in Shangri-La, Yunnan. **For more details, go to [thehiddenvalleyresort.com](http://thehiddenvalleyresort.com)**

### How to win the giveaway:

1. Download the SPH Rewards app.
2. Look out for the giveaway in the Rewards section.
3. Save the deal to your e-wallet.
4. Press the "JOIN" button on the top right and answer this question in no more than 100 words: **"Why I want to go to The Hidden Valley Resort in Shangri-La".**

**The contest ends on Feb 8 and the winner will be informed by Feb 18. The travel period is between March and May 2019.**

The winner is required to participate in a media interview prior to the trip and to share photos on his or her social media during his or her stay. Other terms and conditions apply.

**Check out this ST video: <http://str.sg/shangrila>**



**ST+**  
news with benefits

## Great food can't save malls from going extinct

LONDON • Mr Stephen Wall's restaurant chain Pho is the kind of tenant that mall landlords would love to attract.

The Vietnamese menu is right on trend, the business is expanding and it has a track record of success in shopping centres.

Yet, he thinks that even restaurants like his will not be the saviour of malls suffering from the rise of online retailing.

"Food is not the solution for most landlords. Saturation has occurred because too many restaurants are being put into shopping centres," said Mr Wall, who founded the British chain with his wife in 2005.

As competition from the likes of Amazon and Asos intensified, British malls looked to food as a way to stay relevant. People would go to the restaurants, buy some clothes in the shops while there, and the extra spending would allow the landlord to boost the rents.

Instead, food and beverage operators have been hurt over the past 12 months by rapid expansion and a consumer-spending slowdown.

Popular names like Gourmet Burger Kitchen, pasta place Carluccio's and the Jamie Oliver chain, often found at big malls in London or Manchester, have been among those suffering.

Nationwide, the number of restaurants going insolvent rose 24 per cent last year, compared with 2017.

A combination of increased competition, rising food costs because

of the pound's weakness after the Brexit vote and a government apprenticeship levy have hurt operators. Many brands are very similar and consumers cannot differentiate among them in any way other than price, said Mr James Child, a retail analyst with EG.

Food and drink operators took 13 per cent of newly leased space in shopping malls last year, the lowest level in at least six years, according to Radius Data Exchange.

A year earlier, it was 20 per cent.

One big problem is that the malls are competing for diners with downtown areas, which offer many more attractions. In London's West End, you are feeding people who are there for work, the theatre, shopping or just wandering around, said Mr Brian Bickell, chief executive at Shaftesbury.

**Food is not the solution for most landlords. Saturation has occurred because too many restaurants are being put into shopping centres.**



**MR STEPHEN WALL**, who founded British chain Pho, which sells Vietnamese food

Malls, by contrast, offer far more capacity than there is demand, according to Mr Ewan Venters, chief executive at Fortnum & Mason, the upmarket retailer which recently opened a dining area in the Royal Exchange, a small luxury mall opposite the Bank of England.

"The whole thing of the 'experience economy' came in. You're not just trying to sell to people. You are trying to entertain them," he said.

"It all happened very quickly in malls and, suddenly, there was too much capacity and not enough people to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner in these vast places. I'm not surprised they are cutting back now."

Mall landlords may do well to take a step back and draw inspiration from other types of locations, said Ms Sue Munden, an analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence.

"One of the problems is that landlords have not taken enough care in the curation of the space," she said. "Mixing locally-inspired offers with some known brands might be a more successful strategy."

Shopping centres are not getting much relief from their traditional tenants either after a year of struggle and it may only get worse. Brands such as Debenhams, Marks & Spencer Group and New Look have already vowed to close stores.

A dismal Christmas performance could accelerate the trend and add more vacancies for landlords.

To succeed, malls will need to add hotels, apartments and leisure attractions, helping to create mixed-use neighbourhoods, said Mr Des Gunewardena, chief executive of restaurant group D&D London.

"That's the future," he said. "Shopping malls are not going to be saved by casual dining chains."

BLOOMBERG

**THE STRAITS TIMES**  
WE'VE GOT SINGAPORE COVERED

Subscribe now at [stsub.sg](http://stsub.sg)  
or call 6388-3838



Comics

BABY BLUES



GARFIELD



Free to air

CHANNEL 5

**AM**  
6.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 15 (HD) (PG) (V)  
7.00 First Look Asia (Simulcast From CNA) (CA)  
9.00 The Dr Oz Show 10 (HD) (IE)  
10.00 The \$100,000 Pyramid (HD) (PG) (V)  
10.30 Everyday Gourmet 3 (HD) (IE)  
11.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16 (V)  
**PM**  
12.00 Martha Bakes 6 (IE)  
12.30 Gordon Ramsay's Ultimate Cookery Course (IE)  
1.00 Films & Stars (PG) (V)  
1.30 Kin (PG) (CC) (V)  
2.00 Phua Chu Kang Pte Ltd 4 (SC)  
2.30 Super Mum Super Dad (HD) (V)  
3.00 The Dr Oz Show 10 (HD) (PG) (IE)  
4.00 Make You Laugh Out Loud 3 (PG) (V)  
4.30 Survivor 36 (PG) (V)  
5.30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16 (PG) (V)  
6.30 The \$100,000 Pyramid (PG) (V)  
7.00 Wheel Of Fortune 36 (HD) (CC) (V)  
7.30 Little Big Shots US 3 (CC) (V)  
8.30 Kin (HD) (PG) (CC) (D)  
9.00 News 5  
9.30 Hands That Shaped The Nation (IE) (Season Premiere)  
10.00 Avenue 14 (PG13) (D)  
11.00 Grimm 6 (PG13) (D)  
**AM**  
12.00 Kin (PG) (CC) (D)  
12.30 Code Of Law 4 (PG13) (D)  
1.30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16 (PG) (V)  
2.20 Hawaii Five-O 7 (PG13) (D)  
3.10 Euromaxx (Cul)  
3.40 Arts 21 (PG) (Cul)  
4.10 Martha Bakes 6 (IE)  
4.40 Gordon Ramsay's Ultimate Cookery Course (IE)  
5.10 The Dr Oz Show 10 (IE)

CHANNEL 8

**AM**  
6.00 3-Plus-13 (V)  
7.00 Tuesday Report – Ninety Years Young (CC) (IE) (Finale)  
7.30 Hello Singapore Highlights (HD) (News)  
8.00 Heart To Heart (PG) (CC) (D)

9.00 Morning Express (HD) (News)  
9.30 Jalan Jalan (PG) (CC) (D)  
10.00 Food and Beverage Investigators 8 (IE)  
10.30 Night Market Life a.k.a. Life (PG) (D)  
**PM**  
12.30 Body SOS 7 (PG) (CC) (V)  
1.00 News 8 At One (HD)  
1.30 Focus (CC) (CA)  
2.00 Beijing Opera Cats (S)  
2.30 The Precedents (PG) (D)  
3.30 The Golden Path (CC) (D)  
4.30 Taste Of Life (PG) (D)  
5.30 118 Reunion (PG) (CC) (D)  
6.30 Hello Singapore (HD) (News)  
7.30 Jalan Jalan (PG) (CC) (D)  
8.00 Old Taste Detective (CC) (IE)  
9.00 Walk With Me (PG) (CC) (D) (Debut)  
10.00 News Tonight  
10.30 Incredible Tales 8 (HD) (PG13) (CC) (D)  
11.00 Princess Agents (PG13) (D)  
**AM**  
12.00 The Princess Weiyoung (PG) (D)  
1.00 Super Taste 12 (V)  
2.00 A Time To Dance (D)  
4.00 A Place Called Home (PG) (D)

CHANNEL U

**PM**  
3.00 Markets In Asia (CC) (IE)  
4.00 Find Me A Singaporean 3 (IE)  
5.00 Cheongdamdong Scandal (PG) (CC) (D)  
6.00 The Girl Who Sees Smells (PG) (CC) (D)  
7.00 My Father Is Strange (PG) (CC) (D)  
9.00 Blue Tick (PG) (CC) (D)  
10.00 Brother's Keeper 2 (PG) (CC) (D)  
11.00 News Tonight  
11.30 Blue Tick (PG) (CC) (D)  
**AM**  
12.30 My Father Is Strange (PG) (CC) (D)  
2.30 Close

CNA

**AM**  
6.00 Singapore Tonight  
6.30 Money Mind  
7.00 First Look Asia  
9.00 Asia Business First  
10.02 Real Deal  
11.00 News Now  
**PM**  
1.02 Neighbours: Singapore-Malaysia

2.00 News Now  
4.02 Edible Wild  
4.30 Made In Singapore  
5.00 News Now  
7.02 Neighbours: Singapore-Malaysia  
8.00 Primetime Asia  
9.02 Becoming Singapore (CC)  
10.00 Singapore Tonight  
11.02 Neighbours: Singapore-Malaysia  
**AM**  
12.00 News Now  
12.30 Money Mind  
1.02 Becoming Singapore  
2.00 News Now  
2.30 Once A Refugee  
3.02 Edible Wild  
3.30 Made In Singapore  
4.00 News Now  
4.30 Once A Refugee  
5.02 Becoming Singapore  
Programmes may be pre-empted by breaking news

VASANTHAM

**PM**  
3.00 Super Samayal 4 (IE)  
3.30 Aasai Aasaaya – Cooking For Love (IE)  
4.00 Priyasakhi (D)  
4.30 Thedal – Star Search 2016 (V)  
5.30 Mottu Patlu (S)  
6.00 Raama Seetha 2 (PG) (D)  
7.00 Konjam Soru Konjam Varalaru (CC) (V)  
7.30 Mella Thiranthatu Katavu 3 (PG) (CC) (D)  
8.00 Uyire (PG) (CC) (D)  
8.30 Tamil Seithi (News)  
9.00 Ms V Supreme 2019 (CC) (V)  
10.00 Rowthiram (PG) (CC) (D)  
10.30 Nijangal (PG) (CC) (D)  
11.00 Nyabagam Varuthae 3 (V)  
11.30 Tamil Seithi (News) (Encore)  
**AM**  
12.00 Close

OKTO

**AM**  
9.00 Tip The Mouse (P)  
9.30 Teddies (P)  
10.00 Doki Specials (P)  
10.30 Sesame Street (HD) (P)  
11.00 Mouk (P)  
11.30 Ready Jet Go! (P)

**PM**  
12.00 Hiccup & Sneeze (P)  
12.30 Teddies (HD) (IE)  
1.00 Coconut The Little Dragon (P)  
1.30 Tip The Mouse (P)  
2.00 Doki Specials (P)  
2.30 Sesame Street (HD) (P)  
3.00 Mouk (P)  
3.30 Ready Jet Go! (P)  
4.00 Odd Squad (HD) (S)  
4.30 Captain Flinn And The Pirate Dinosaurs (S)  
5.00 Littlest Pet Shop (S)  
5.30 Marcus Level (S)  
6.00 The Lion Guard (S)  
6.30 Basic Mini-tary Training (S)  
7.00 Alpha And Omega: The Legend Of The Saw-Toothed Cave (HD) (CC) (S)  
8.00 Minuscule (HD) (S)  
8.30 Inazuma Eleven (CC) (S)  
9.00 ITTF World Tour – Hungarian Open 2019 (Sports)  
11.30 American Ninja Warrior 6 (HD) (PG) (Sports)  
**AM**  
12.20 Close

SURIA

**PM**  
3.00 Juxbox Ekspres  
4.00 Seindah Takdir Cinta (HD) (PG) (D)  
5.00 Setia Menunggumu (PG) (CC) (D)  
6.00 BoBoiBoy Galaxy (HD) (S)  
6.30 E.A.T (HD) (CC) (IE)  
7.00 Makmum Yang Paling Aku Cinta (PG) (CC) (D)  
8.00 Berita (HD) (News)  
8.30 Reka (HD) (CC) (IE)  
9.30 Mak Cun 4 (HD) (PG) (CC) (D)  
10.30 InstaGeram (PG) (CC) (D)  
11.30 Berita (HD) (News) (R)  
**AM**  
12.00 Close  
  
C: Children; CA: Current Affairs;  
CC: Closed Captions; Cul: Culture;  
D: Drama; IE: Info-Ed; M: Movies;  
P: Preschool; PG: Parental Guidance;  
R: Repeat; S: Schoolkids; SC: Sitcom;  
V: Variety

Programme schedules correct at time of printing. Telecast details from Mediacorp, StarHub and Singtel TV. For pay TV updates, go to [www.starhub.com/tv](http://www.starhub.com/tv) or [www.singtelv.com.sg](http://www.singtelv.com.sg)

TheStarsSay

Aries (March 21 - April 19)

Try not to force anything but take it as it comes. Take care of the necessities and leave the rest for later.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20)

Your passions are closer to the surface and you are likely to make a romantic breakthrough of some kind.

Gemini (May 21 - June 20)

Your emotions are running wild. You may not be as articulate as usual, but your body language is clear.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22)

This is not the best time to sign new agreements, but if you are sure about them, get started soon.

Leo (July 23 - Aug 22)

Try not to rely too heavily on reason. Your intuitive powers may lead you somewhere interesting.

Virgo (Aug 23 - Sept 22)

It is a good idea for you to keep moving. See if you can indulge your restless nature with a long walk.

Libra (Sept 23 - Oct 22)

Your finances may seem dire, but getting work as soon as you can will make the situation all right.

Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)

Try to find a new way to keep your people organised. The quietest ones need your attention now.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)

Your moods are a bit darker than usual. Hunker down and work through whatever it is that is causing this.

Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)

Look forward to a new perk though it may come with some measure of local fame.

Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18)

Slow down and get people to lend a hand. Do not worry, the burden will get lighter soon.

Pisces (Feb 19 - March 20)

Someone is treating you like a doormat. Now is the time to stand up for yourself.

• Provided by Astrology.com ([www.astrology.com](http://www.astrology.com))

Radio

KISS92

**AM**  
6.00 Maddy, Jason & Arnold In The Morning  
10.00 Carol Smith  
**PM**  
1.00 Charmaine Yee  
4.00 Shan Wee  
8.00 Joshi's Goodnight Kiss

ONE FM 91.3

**AM**  
6.00 ONE FM's #1 Breakfast Show With Glenn And The Flying Dutchman  
10.00 Cheryl Miles  
**PM**  
4.00 Weekdays With ONE FM

MONEY FM 89.3

**AM**  
6.00 The Breakfast Huddle With Elliott Danker, Yasmin Jonkers & Ryan Huang  
10.00 Middyay With Howie Lim  
**PM**  
2.00 Prime Time With Claressa Monteiro  
4.00 The Curve With Michelle Martin & Bernard Lim

UFM100.3

**AM**  
6.00 UFM100.3 Mornings With Wenhong, Limei & Xiaozhu  
10.00 Lively Life With Kemlin  
**PM**  
1.00 Tea With Yuling  
4.00 Sing-a-long With Xinying & Weilong  
8.00 Feel The Night With Chengyao

96.3 HAO FM

**AM**  
6.00 Morning Drive Time With Jing Yun, De Ming And Jie Qi  
10.00 Lunch Break With Anna  
**PM**  
1.00 Automation  
4.00 Evening Drive Time With Li Yi And Guo Xian  
8.00 Night Time With Wei Wen

Tides

SUN RISE/SET TIME: 7:16am/7:20pm

MOON RISE/SET TIME: 12:59am/12:0pm

**TIDES TODAY:** Singapore: 4.30am (2.7m), 10.43am (1.1m), 4.50pm (2.5m), 10.58pm (1.3m). Desaru: 4.05am (2.7m), 10.20am (1.3m), 4.35pm (2.4m), 10.35pm (1.6m). Port Dickson: 6.33am (0.7m), 11.57am (1.9m), 6.01pm (0.7m). Mersing: 3.22am (2.9m), 10.13am (1.4m), 4.30pm (2.5m), 10.10pm (1.9m).

**TIDES TOMORROW:** Singapore: 5.16am (2.7m), 11.58am (1.1m), 6.22pm (2.3m). Desaru: 4.48am (2.5m), 11.30am (1.3m), 6.13pm (2.4m). Port Dickson: 12.29am (2.2m), 7.39am (0.9m), 1.01pm (1.7m), 6.58pm (0.8m). Mersing: 3.56am (2.7m), 11.04am (1.3m), 6.12pm (2.6m), 11.43pm (2.1m).

For updates and more details, call Meteorological Service Singapore, NEA, on 6542-7788 or go to [www.nea.gov.sg](http://www.nea.gov.sg)

StarHub TV

HISTORY (CHANNEL 401)

**AM**  
8.30 American Ripper  
9.30 The Last Pope?  
11.20 Mountain Men 7  
**PM**  
12.15 Football Godfathers  
1.10 The Pickers 12  
2.05 Pawn Stars 18  
2.35 Forged In Fire 5  
3.30 The Last Pope?  
5.20 American Ripper  
6.15 The Pickers 11  
7.10 Counting Cars 5  
8.05 Storage Wars: Miami  
8.30 Storage Wars 10  
9.00 The Cars That Made America  
10.50 History Drama: Vikings 5  
11.45 Football Godfathers

LIFETIME (CHANNEL 514)

**AM**  
8.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16  
9.00 Little Women: Terra's Big House  
10.00 Seatbelt Psychic  
11.00 Atlanta Plastic  
**PM**  
12.00 Dance Moms 6  
1.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16  
2.00 Deadly Secrets By The Lake  
3.35 The Rap Game 3  
4.30 Little Women LA: Terra's Little Family  
5.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16  
6.00 Idol Moms  
7.00 Live PD Presents: Women On Patrol  
8.00 Leah Remini: Scientology & The Aftermath/9.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16/10.00 Drink, Slay, Love  
11.35 Idol Moms

HBO (CHANNEL 601)

**AM**  
8.00 The Peacemaker (NC16)  
10.00 True Detective 3 (NC16)  
11.00 Crashing 3 (NC16)  
11.30 Braven (NC16)  
**PM**  
1.00 Justice League/3.05 The Lego Ninjago Movie/4.45 Hotel For Dogs  
6.20 Win A Date With Tad Hamilton!  
7.55 Star Trek (2009)/10.00 True Detective 3 (NC16)/11.00 Crashing 3 (NC16)  
11.30 High Maintenance 3 (M18)

CINEMAX (CHANNEL 611)

**AM**  
8.10 Copycat (NC16)/10.10 Mission To Mars  
**PM**  
12.00 Inside Man  
2.05 Smokey And The Bandit II  
3.45 Bigger Fatter Liar/5.20 Dragnet  
7.00 The Untouchables/9.00 Strike Back 6  
10.00 Black Hawk Down (NC16)  
**AM**  
12.20 Shutter (NC16)

HUB E CITY (CHANNEL 825)

**AM**  
8.15 Hot Door Night 15 (HD)

9.15 Dowry (HD)/10.15 I Am The Actor (HD)  
**PM**  
12.15 The Gentlemen Of Wolgyesu Tailor Shop (HD)/1.30 Tomorrow With You (HD)  
2.45 Where Are We Going, Dad? 5 (HD)  
4.45 The Gentlemen Of Wolgyesu Tailor Shop (HD)/6.00 Dowry (HD)  
7.00 Hot Door Night 16 (HD)  
8.00 Perfect Dating 6 (HD)  
9.30 Hong Kong Neighbourhood Gems (HD)/10.00 Noble Aspirations (HD)  
11.00 Hot Door Night 16 (HD)

HUB SPORTS 1 (CHANNEL 201)

**AM**  
7.00 Table Tennis: Seamaster 2019 ITTF World Tour Hungarian Open: Men's Semi-finals  
9.00 Table Tennis: Seamaster 2019 ITTF World Tour Hungarian Open: Women's & Men's Singles Finals  
11.30 Tennis: ATP World Tour Uncovered 2019  
**PM**  
12.00 Cycling: 2018 Shanghai Criterium By Le Tour de France Highlights  
1.00 Mountain Bike: Crankworx World Tour 2018: Rotorua Highlights  
2.00 Motorsports: FIA World RallyCross Championship 2018 R1 Barcelona Highlights  
3.00 Multi Sport: Action Sports World 2018  
4.00 Mountain Bike: Enduro World Series 2018: Montagnes Du Caroux France Highlights/4.30 Mountain Bike: Enduro World Series 2018: Petzen-Jamnica, Austria/Slovenia Highlights  
5.00 Table Tennis: Seamaster 2019 ITTF World Tour Hungarian Open: Women's Semi-finals, Men's Quarter-finals and Mixed Doubles Finals/9.00 Table Tennis: Seamaster 2019 ITTF World Tour Hungarian Open: Men's Quarter-finals, Women's & Men's Doubles Finals  
**AM**  
12.00 Tennis: Mubadala World Tennis Championship 2018 Day 2 5th Place Match  
1.30 Tennis: Mubadala World Tennis Championship 2018 Day 2 Semi-finals 1

HUB SPORTS 2 (CHANNEL 202)

**AM**  
7.30 Football: EFL Carabao Cup 2018 Semi-finals 2, Leg 2 Burton Albion Vs Manchester City/9.30 Asean Basketball League 2018/19 Westports Malaysia Dragons Vs Mono Vampire Basketball Club  
11.30 Magazine: Omnisport.TV  
**PM**  
12.00 HSBC World Rugby Sevens World Series 2018/19 Round 3 Hamilton: Matches 1 To 12  
4.30 National Basketball League Round 15 Adelaide 36ers Vs Melbourne United (Live)  
6.30 Magazine: Trans World Sport 2019  
7.30 Magazine: Omnisport.TV  
8.00 WWE Experience (PG)  
9.00 Football: Coppa Italia 2018/19 Preview  
9.30 Asean Basketball League 2018/19 Singapore Slingers Vs Saigon Heat  
11.30 Magazine: Omnisport.TV  
**AM**  
12.00 National Basketball League Round 15 Adelaide 36ers Vs Melbourne United

Singtel TV

CARTOON NETWORK (CHANNEL 226)

**AM**  
6.00 Oggy & The Cockroaches  
7.00 The Tom And Jerry Show  
8.00 Teen Titans Go!  
9.00 Grizzly And The Lemmings  
9.30 The Tom And Jerry Show  
10.00 We Bare Bears  
10.30 Supernobots  
11.00 The Powerpuff Girls  
**PM**  
12.00 Teen Titans Go!  
1.00 We Bare Bears  
2.00 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu  
2.30 The Powerpuff Girls  
3.00 Running Man Animation  
3.30 The Amazing World Of Gumball  
4.00 We Bare Bears  
4.30 The Powerpuff Girls  
5.00 Teen Titans Go!  
5.30 Ben 10  
6.00 Oggy & The Cockroaches  
6.30 Running Man Animation  
7.00 The Tom And Jerry Show  
7.30 Grizzly And The Lemmings  
8.00 We Bare Bears  
9.00 The Powerpuff Girls  
10.00 Regular Show  
10.30 Steven Universe  
11.00 Clarence  
11.30 Adventure Time

AXN (HD) (CHANNEL 304)

**AM**  
6.00 MacGyver 2  
6.45 Criminal Minds: Suspect Behavior  
7.30 Caught On Camera With Nick Cannon 2  
8.20 The Elements: Cosentino  
9.10 American Ninja Warrior 8  
10.00 MacGyver 2  
10.50 Caught On Camera With Nick Cannon 3  
11.40 MacGyver 3  
**PM**  
12.30 Cyril: Simply Magic  
1.25 The Elements: Cosentino  
2.15 American Ninja Warrior 8  
3.05 Caught On Camera With Nick Cannon 2  
3.55 MacGyver 2  
4.45 Criminal Minds: Suspect Behavior  
5.35 American Ninja Warrior 8  
6.25 Instinct  
7.15 The Karate Kid (2010)  
9.45 Hawaii Five-O 9  
10.35 MacGyver 3  
11.25 Charlie's Angels

WARNER TV (HD) (CHANNEL 306)

**AM**  
6.00 Clipaholics  
6.50 Top 20 Funniest  
7.40 Major Crimes  
8.25 Supergirl 2  
9.10 The Flash 3  
10.00 Clipaholics  
10.50 Gotham 5  
11.40 Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice







# B| HOME

# 50

NUMBER OF NEW LIFTS UP AND RUNNING FOR SEMBAWANG GRC RESIDENTS **B2**



## READING TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Use the Internet to look up YouTube videos that teach reading and phonics
- If parents are unfamiliar with a language (for example, English), they can use Google to sound out any words that children don't know when they read simple picture books together
- If you don't have 30 minutes a day to spare for reading with your child, start with 10 minutes a day, or make it a thrice-a-week habit
- Use everyday items seen in the environment, such as signboards, to help children recognise words
- Go for free storytelling programmes at public libraries, and museums and cultural events
- Parents can set a good example for their children by reading articles, books and the newspapers regularly, as children learn from their parents' behaviour

Sources: Ms Lenny Rahman; Ms Bernice Lee, director at literacy programme ReadAble

The debate on reading comes even as a study last year found that children here rank second out of 58 territories in terms of how well pupils read. ST PHOTO: AZMI ATHNI

## Who should teach kids to read: Teachers or parents?

Facebook post by educator sparks debate on whose responsibility it is to teach pupils to read

Yuen Sin

Earlier this month, Ms Lenny Rahman, a physical education teacher, was carrying out a classroom exercise for Primary 1 pupils that required them to label different body parts. A pupil asked her for help, and she told him to read out the in-

structions from his textbook.

But the 34-year-old realised that he could not recognise even simple words such as "is", "the" and "her".

Who reads to him, she asked. "My teacher," he replied. What about people at home? His parents are usually at work on shift jobs, or asleep when they are home, he said. Having seen many other such

>1,000

Number of shares in a week physical education teacher Lenny Rahman's Facebook post received.

cases where parents' lack of involvement in a child's education contributed to him feeling demoralised and lagging behind his peers, she took to Facebook to air her frustrations.

"It baffles me that in this day and age there are kids in Primary 1 who do not know how to read... Busy working but you cannot spend time with your kid? Then why have kids in the first place?!" she wrote in a public post. "Please, if you think you don't have the means, there are these things called condoms and birth control. They're cheaper than raising a child."

The strongly worded post, which was partially written in Malay, quickly went viral. It racked up more than 1,000 shares in a week, with many weighing in on the question of who should be responsible

for teaching children to read.

This comes even as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study of Primary 4 pupils here last year found that children in Singapore rank second out of 58 territories in terms of how well pupils read, coming in after Russia.

The post sparked vociferous opposition from parents like housewife Nafisah Mohamad, 32, a mother of a two-year-old boy, who said: "Some people are just slow. Not everybody has the same capacity in their brains."

"Parents pay the school fees, which also indirectly pay for the teacher's salary. Why should the teacher talk bad about her 'client'?"

Others, such as Madam Ang Ai

[NO EXCUSES continued on B2](#)

## Share the gift of good fortune this Lunar New Year

Simply charge to your HSBC Credit Card from now to 28 February 2019 to redeem limited edition NETS FlashPay Cards:

- Spend a minimum of S\$2,888 to redeem choice of 1 NETS FlashPay Card with value S\$50\*
- Spend a minimum of S\$4,888 to redeem 1 NETS FlashPay Card set with value S\$100†

Limited edition  
His and Hers design

SMS the following to **74722** to participate:  
**CNY <space> HUAT <space> 16-digit credit card number**  
Visit [hsbc.com.sg/lny](http://hsbc.com.sg/lny) for details

Not an HSBC credit cardholder?  
Apply and get a Samsonite Astra 55cm Luggage worth S\$350.  
Plus, 5% cash back on contactless payments‡.

HSBC

Together we thrive

\*Choice of design is on first come first served basis. †Card Set comprises of 2 NETS FlashPay Cards, each with value worth S\$50. Promotion is valid from 21 January to 28 February 2019, both dates inclusive. Cardholders are required to charge the relevant accumulated minimum qualifying spend to their HSBC Credit Card and register the same card within the promotional period to be eligible to redeem the relevant gift. All gifts are valid while stocks last, on a first-come-first-served basis. HSBC is not a supplier of the products and/or services provided by the merchant(s) involved in this promotion and will not accept any liability in relation thereto. ‡To qualify, the HSBC Visa Platinum or HSBC Revolution Credit Card or HSBC Advance Credit Card application must be submitted between 1 January and 28 February 2019. Minimum spend requirements and other terms and conditions apply. HSBC reserves the right to vary the terms and conditions of, or withdraw this Promotion at any time without prior notice. In case of any dispute, the decision of HSBC shall be final. All information is correct at the time of print. Please visit [www.hsbc.com.sg/lny](http://www.hsbc.com.sg/lny) for full details.

Issued by HSBC Bank (Singapore) Limited (Company Registration No. 201420624K).





The new lift (right) at Block 772 Woodlands Drive 60 is brighter and more reliable than the old one (left). It is one of 50 new ones installed under Sembawang Town Council's \$41 million Lift Replacement Programme, which will replace 336 lifts serving households in Woodlands, Sembawang and Admiralty by February 2021. PHOTOS: LIANHE ZAOBAO

# New, better lifts for Sembawang GRC residents

First 50 of 336 units installed in town council's move to replace old lifts early as it is more costly to maintain them

Aw Cheng Wei

Residents of Sembawang GRC received the first 50 of 336 lifts in a \$41 million programme that will see the units replaced early by those that are faster, safer and capable of carrying more people.

MP for Sembawang GRC Vikram Nair said at a ceremony yesterday that it is the first time a town council is replacing lifts ahead of schedule on such a large scale, with more than 100 lifts replaced under one programme.

Most lifts have a lifespan of between 25 and 27 years, but the lifts in Sembawang GRC are "being replaced at around the 20-year mark", he said. "We did an analysis of what it would cost to maintain these lifts for the remainder of their lifespan... It was actually going to cost significantly more than if we replaced them early," he added.

The programme, which will be rolled out in phases, will replace lifts that serve 15,260 households in Woodlands, Sembawang and Admiralty by February 2021, said the Sembawang Town Council.

A Sembawang Town Council

spokesman said lifts were previously replaced based on their age. She added that other town councils have also called for tenders or started works to replace lifts ahead of schedule, if doing so is more cost-effective than maintaining them.

The event yesterday was also attended by the other Sembawang GRC MPs - Mr Ong Ye Kung, Mr Khaw Boon Wan, Dr Lim Wee Kiak and Mr Amrin Amin.

Mr Lee Weng Khor, 45, waited three months to have a new lift at Block 769 Woodlands Drive 60. The engineer lives on the top floor of the 14-storey Housing Board block with his wife and daughter. He said the three lifts at the block "sank a bit" when residents stepped into them, and their doors did not always close fully.

"Sometimes, we had to close the doors manually (to get the lift moving)," added Mr Lee, who has lived there for 12 years.

He said problems started surfacing last year, but last August the town council announced the lift replacement programme.

Mr Nair, who is also town council chairman, said the town council had "very healthy lift replacement



Sembawang GRC MPs (from second from left) Ong Ye Kung, Lim Wee Kiak, Khaw Boon Wan, Amrin Amin and Vikram Nair in a new lift at Block 772 Woodlands Drive 60 yesterday. With them is Ms Poh Li San, assistant secretary of Sembawang Citizens' Consultative Committee.

NOT FUNCTIONING WELL

Sometimes, we had to close the doors manually (to get the lift moving).



MR LEE WENG KHOR, who has lived at Block 769 Woodlands Drive 60 for 12 years, on the old lifts at the block.

funds which it could tap" to replace the lifts. Residents will not have to pay for them.

"The new lifts are significantly faster, about 50 per cent faster than the old lifts," he said. The new lifts move 90m a minute compared with the old lifts' 60m a minute.

Mr Nair added that the new lifts can also carry up to 10 people, up

from eight, and come with energy-efficient and safety features.

EM Services, the company that is taking on the works for the first 280 new lifts, had to consider the maintenance needed for the first 10 years of the lifts' working lives as part of the conditions of the tender.

Mr Nair said this means that the company with the winning bid has to take "long-term responsibility" for the new lifts.

It will have to be "more careful with the installation" because it is responsible for all replacements, he added.

The remaining 56 new lifts have not been tendered yet.

At Mr Lee's block, the new lift started operating last month, with a second lift now undergoing replacement works.

"The new lift is brighter, and the buttons are more robust. The lift feels more reliable," he said.

awcw@sph.com.sg

## HDT taxi drivers to get more training support

Timothy Goh

Experienced cabbies under electric taxi operator HDT Singapore Taxi will now be eligible to become mentors for new cabbies, and may even receive an additional allowance when they do so.

HDT cabbies will also be getting more help to upgrade themselves with digital skills.

These were some of the initiatives announced at the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the National Taxi Association (NTA), HDT Singapore Taxi and NTUC's Employment and Employability Institute (e2i) on Saturday.

Under the MOU, full-time HDT taxi drivers will also become members of the NTA. Their membership fees will be borne by HDT.

The cab company was established here in 2016 and runs only electric cars for its taxi service. Last year, it was granted a 10-year full Taxi Service Operator Licence to grow its fleet to 800 vehicles.

It is currently in a partnership with ride-hailing firm Grab, allowing its drivers to get booking jobs from the latter.

The MOU aims to help full-time HDT cabbies keep up with digital transformation, as well as assist them with their career progression.

Some 800 full-time HDT taxi drivers will go through SkillsFuture training on digital skills for the workplace in the next five years. NTA and HDT will co-pay the training fees, with NTUC LearningHub as the key training provider.

Cabbies who wish to move out of their driving roles will get access to training programmes. This is expected to help improve their prospects for career progression.

NTA said that in order to attract and retain cabbies, it will continue to work closely with e2i and HDT to help the latter's taxi drivers keep up with digital transformation, and provide them with opportunities to earn more and lead better lives.

At least one such collaboration currently exists - the Place-and-Train programme. As part of this programme, drivers are given 80 hours to get a sense of what it is like to drive an electric car.

Potential hires are paid on an hourly basis at a rate of about \$7.50 an hour. Since its launch in 2017, more than 80 drivers have gone on the programme and subsequently become full-time drivers.

NTA said that with the signing of the MOU, the partners are committed to do more.

Managing director of HDT Singapore Taxi James Ng said the MOU will help take the company "another step forward, to provide an even better environment to support and encourage (its) drivers".

NTA executive adviser Ang Hin Kee said: "Taxi drivers have to keep up with digital transformation and find new ways to earn more. We hope to help them with training so they can keep up with changes."

timgoh@sph.com.sg

# Having no time to read with kids is poor excuse: Teacher

FROM B1

Ling, 40, who is self-employed and has two daughters aged four and six, said they do not have the time or resources to help their children.

"(My younger daughter) is in childcare from 7am to 7pm, and that's where most of her learning takes place. I work late running an online business selling clothes till 10pm or 11pm so I may not have time to read to her regularly."

Housewife Sarah Lee-Wong, 40, who has a nine-year-old son, added that parents may also lack adequate skills. "When my son was in Primary 1, his Chinese teacher said that she did not have the time to do effective methods of learning *hanyu pinyin* in class, so she said I can do that to help him. Alas, my Mandarin is dismal." He continues to struggle with the subject today.

Angered, some members of the public have stalked Ms Lenny's Facebook profile to identify the school where she had been working as an adjunct teacher, and threatened to make her life a "living hell".

Concerned about her own safety and with the school's reputation in mind, Ms Lenny volunteered to leave last Tuesday.

In response to queries, Mr Thomas Wong, divisional director, HR Solutions and Capabilities at MOE, confirmed that Ms Lenny is no longer working as an adjunct teacher. He added that Ms Lenny's views do not reflect MOE's and that she has been counselled.

Ms Lenny had spent 12 years as a full-time teacher in charge of English, maths, science and PE and two years as an adjunct teacher, and is married without children. She now works as a private tutor.

In an interview on Friday, she told The Straits Times she had been deliberately harsh in her remarks as a wake-up call to parents who "don't even want to try to get involved in their kids' education". Her comments, she clarified, are not directed at parents who have already been trying to help their kids.

Besides parents who lack the willingness to read with their children - even for a few minutes a day - she

LEARNING AT DIFFERENT PACES

Some people are just slow. Not everybody has the same capacity in their brains. Parents pay the school fees, which also indirectly pay for the teacher's salary. Why should the teacher talk bad about her 'client'?



HOUSEWIFE NAFISAH MOHAMAD, mother of a two-year-old boy, on Ms Lenny Rahman's Facebook post.

has also seen other irresponsible acts by parents. Some do not even send their children to school, forcing teachers to have to make house visits, or cause their children to miss school repeatedly when they themselves oversleep.

In other cases, children may be enrolled in extra reading programmes conducted by the school or in MOE's learning support programme, but their progress is stymied as their parents do not help them with reading exercises.

Ms Lenny's bottom-line message to such parents is this: They need to put in some effort if they want to help their kids break out of the poverty cycle or reach their fullest potential. "I'm not saying that it's a parent's responsibility to teach a child. If not, we teachers will be out of a job. They say that it takes a village to raise a child, and if I'm the only villager then it will be very difficult," she said, adding that teachers' efforts at helping pupils will just go to waste if parents do not follow up with their children at home.

Ms Lenny also does not buy the argument that parents juggling multiple shift jobs have no time to spare to read with their children. They can start with reading simple books to their children for just 10 minutes a few times a week, she said.

Learning to read is important, Ms Lenny said, as it will affect one's ability to do maths word problems or answer science questions down the road. "In most cases, a child will just keep having to play catch up, while still trying to learn new things at the same time, and end up getting stuck in a vicious circle."

Experts agree that reading with children is important for their development, but it should be a joyful rather than a pressurising experience. They also advise that the message to parents should be delivered in a "sensitive" manner.

Associate Professor Dora Chen, the head of early childhood education at the Singapore University of Social Sciences, said: "If the process of acquiring the knowledge and skills leads us to the conclusion of 'I am not good at reading' or 'I am stupid, I am incapable', then what is

the use of the drills? The motivation to learn is destroyed."

Dr Jacqueline Chung, academic director and senior principal of St James' Church Kindergarten, said it is important to engage parents in a sensitive manner, rather than lecturing them.

"Some parents may not feel well-equipped to help their children; others may be impatient because they are concerned that their children are not reading yet. The ability to read is developed over time and we need to help parents understand that it takes patience and encouragement," she said.

Ms Lenny said she does not regret making the Facebook post - in fact, some good has come out of it, as a few parents who initially chafed at her remarks have started reading with their children or taking them to the library, she said.

"If you decide to look at my post positively, not only will your relationship with your child improve, but your child will also benefit from it."

yuensin@sph.com.sg



## Tossing up a healthier yusheng



Here's a healthier version of yusheng, the raw fish salad that is tossed for good luck during Chinese New Year. The dish prepared by housewife Carrie Pang, 38, and her father, Mr Pang Seng Chiang, a 67-year-old business owner, won the Great Lo Hei Challenge organised by Cold Storage at its supermarket in Bugis yesterday. They received \$688 worth of Cold Storage vouchers. Their version of yusheng included vegetables like capsicum, red cabbage and sunflower kernel, with pineapple and mango in the main dressing sauce. Three pairs of finalists had been shortlisted for the challenge from a two-week-long Facebook contest, which asked participants to submit their version of a healthy yusheng recipe in the comments section of the contest post. The three recipes with the most "likes" were selected. ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

# 'Bomb' goes off in mock terror attack



### Exercise held at Tampines West MRT station to test community readiness, emergency response

Jolene Ang

A bomb was detonated, rapid gunfire was exchanged and acrid smoke filled the air at Tampines West MRT station yesterday.

It was all part of a simulated terror attack at the Downtown Line station, involving two gunmen and a suicide bomber.

Called Exercise Quicksand, it was a public transport contingency exercise conducted by the Singapore Police Force and supported by Singapore Civil Defence Force, Land Transport Authority and SBS Transit. About 120 role players and observers from the agencies took part.

The exercise began at around 1pm when the two gunmen, who were carrying bulky backpacks, entered the MRT station.

A shoot-out ensued when trans-

port security officers tried to detain the gunmen. Three commuters in the station took cover behind a wall to report the attack to the police via an SMS to 71999. One of the commuters was shot and the other two performed first aid on him.

Police officers then arrived at the scene and subdued the gunmen.

Meanwhile, a third man wearing a denim jacket had trailed behind the gunmen and was able to get to the train platform unnoticed.

He detonated a bomb attached to his vest, but everyone in the station had been evacuated by then.

Exercise Quicksand was over in 45 minutes.

In 2014, a similar anti-terror exercise for public transport operators was held at Dhoby Ghaut MRT.

Minister for the Environment and Water Resources Masagos Zulkifli, who observed the exercise, said it was important to always be prepared, be it by having agencies work together to run such exercises or reminding the public that terror attacks could happen.

For a country like Singapore, "which is a prize for any terrorist

(attackers) to boast about, we are vulnerable and therefore have to be prepared as much as possible", he said.

"Even in preventing such perpetrators from forming a base in Singapore for indoctrination and extreme views, we must do our best," said Mr Masagos, who is also Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs and an MP for Tampines GRC.

The exercise is part of SGSecure – the national terrorism awareness movement – and aims to enhance the security preparedness and joint response between the Home Team agencies, public transport operator and the community through a simulated terror attack in an MRT station.

Commander of Public Transport Security Command and Assistant Commissioner of Police Koh Wei Keong said public transport hubs have high human traffic and are targets for terrorists.

"The exercise demonstrates that when the community is prepared, with the necessary skills and knowledge, it can help to save lives."

jolenezl@sph.com.sg

A gunman and a suicide bomber, both role players, lying dead on the floor at the platform of Tampines West MRT station where anti-terror drill Exercise Quicksand was held yesterday. ST PHOTO: JASMINE CHOONG

### Beriani quinoa dan dal?

DON'T MISS MANY MORE DELICIOUS AND HEALTHY RECIPES ONLY IN  
**Berita Harian**  
ON SMARTPHONE AND COMPUTER  
OR VISIT [www.beritaharian.com.sg](http://www.beritaharian.com.sg)

### SLEEP BETTER

Designed to help you sleep better and wake up refreshed.

Natural Frequency Technology® Inside

CHINESE NEW YEAR OFFER  
Free diffuser and insomnia oil set

**PHILIP STEIN**  
WEAR YOUR WELLBEING

CALL US FOR A FREE TRIAL | 360 Orchard Road International Building, #12-08 Tel: 66347407

天降财神到

# Giant

十全十美大送财!  
[giant.sg/cny](http://giant.sg/cny)

**TODAY ONLY!**

八方云集

**HUAT!**

## 8 DAYS TO CNY

Offers only valid on 28 January 2019

**SAVE 50%**

**3 FOR \$5.95**

CHILE Blueberries 125g  
U.P. 3 for \$11.85

**SAVE 31%**

**\$6.88**

SPANISH IBERICO Pork Shabu Shabu  
U.P. \$9.90

**SAVE 26%**

**\$2.95**

THAILAND Asparagus 250g  
U.P. \$4

**SAVE 21%**

**2 FOR \$15.80**

Frozen Scallops 500g  
U.P. 2 for \$20

**SAVE 17%**

**\$5.95**

NATURE'S WONDERS Baked USA Walnuts 200g  
U.P. \$7.20

**We Are Open On The First 2 Days of Chinese New Year!**

**SHOP ONLINE**  
[www.giantonline.com.sg](http://www.giantonline.com.sg)

**FOLLOW ME FOR MORE LOBANGS!**  
@GiantSingaporeClub

**CHECK OUT Our Extended Shopping Hours!**

While stocks last. Availability differs from store to store. No traders allowed. Pictures are for illustration purposes only. Trimmings and props are not included. Exclusion list applies. Prices shown are correct at time of printing. Please check our website or in-store for the latest updates.



# SPEAKING THROUGH PICTURES

## House Speaker Tan Chuan-jin raising funds for 13 charities through photo exhibition

**Neo Xiaobin**  
Executive Photojournalist

Singapore's 10th Speaker of Parliament Tan Chuan-jin has a rather poetic name that manifests in his photography and its purpose. The Chinese character "chuan" means river and "ren" ("jin" in dialect) means benevolence. Creeks and plains feature prominently in his landscape photography, and his hobby of over 20 years has become a way of serving the community. This endeavour began with his first book, *The World We Live In*, published in 2014 to raise funds for charity. Since then, Mr Tan has continued to raise funds at charity events by auctioning off prints. He has raised over \$3 million to date for various charities and causes. To mark Singapore's bicentennial year – the 200th anniversary of Sir Stamford Raffles' arrival in Singapore in 1819 – Mr Tan will be launch-

ing a fund-raising photo exhibition for local charities this Thursday, in partnership with Hope Initiative Alliance, arts@work, Far East Organization and Far East Plaza. Titled *Our Place In The World*, the display at Far East Plaza Level 2 Concourse will be open to the public from Feb 1 to Feb 28 this year. It showcases photographs taken by Mr Tan in 20 countries over the last 20 years. These include panoramic shots of landscapes and cities, with a focus on different peoples and communities who have made their homes in these spaces. Mr Tan hopes to use the exhibition to raise funds for the poor, disadvantaged and marginalised communities in Singapore. The public can support the efforts through donations. They can receive a limited-edition exclusive metal print for a \$10,000 donation, a premium photo book box set for a \$5,000 donation, a special photo book box set for a \$1,000 donation, or a postcard pack by giving \$50.

All proceeds will go towards 13 partnering charities, including The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund, Care Corner Singapore, Centre for Fathering, HealthServe and The Turning Point, among others. For Mr Tan – who was an army brigadier-general and head of the Training and Doctrine Command before entering politics – his interest in photography started when he joined the army. In 1988, he was an officer cadet training in the countryside in Sandhurst, England, and wanted to capture the breathtaking and dramatic scenery, but felt that he needed something better than his point-and-shoot camera. He bought his first fully manual film camera, a Praktica BX20, when he went to university in London. It was also then that he started looking at the works of American landscape photographer Ansel Adams. Mr Tan now usually travels with two mirrorless digital cameras, a tripod and three lenses – including a 100-400mm telephoto lens. He also shoots with his iPhone sometimes. The oldest image in this exhibition was taken about 20 years ago,

## Tan Chuan-jin's love for photography



when he was travelling with his family in the Lake District in England and the most recent one from his trip to Japan last year. Mr Tan has waited as long as five hours to take a photograph. "Usually, I try to catch the sunset and sunrise. Mostly sunsets, because I can't get up for sunrise," he says with a laugh. He dedicates his second photo book to his family, who have stood patiently with him, often frozen, sometimes sleepy, exhausted, famished and incredulous, as he waited

for the perfect shot. Mr Tan is married with two children – his daughter is 21 and his son, 17. Besides being the Speaker, he has been a Member of Parliament for Marine Parade GRC since 2011 and is also president of the Singapore National Olympic Council. "You are wearing different hats, but the cause that I'm serving is the same. It's just applying it in a different space. "A lot of it is about community. It's about our country. It's about

bringing people together," he says. Mr Tan draws parallels between photography and the way he does things and looks at things. He says: "Part of photography is how you look at the world. Sometimes we get poor weather. But you try and make that work for you. It's about looking for silver linings, and looking from different angles and perspectives. "Some of my most dramatic pictures came amid poor weather when one would often think that it was a washout. "And truly, in everything, there is beauty, isn't it, if we look hard enough. Life is the way it is. But it's how you choose to view it and what you make of it." Mr Tan also sees his hobby as a way to do what he can while he is able to. "If it helps encourage someone, to nudge him or her to donate for a good cause, get a print or get a book, why not?" xiaobinn@sph.com.sg

Support the cause by visiting <https://www.hia.sg/ourplaceinthe> world for more information.



### HOW TO SUPPORT

The public can support the fund-raising efforts by making a donation and receive:

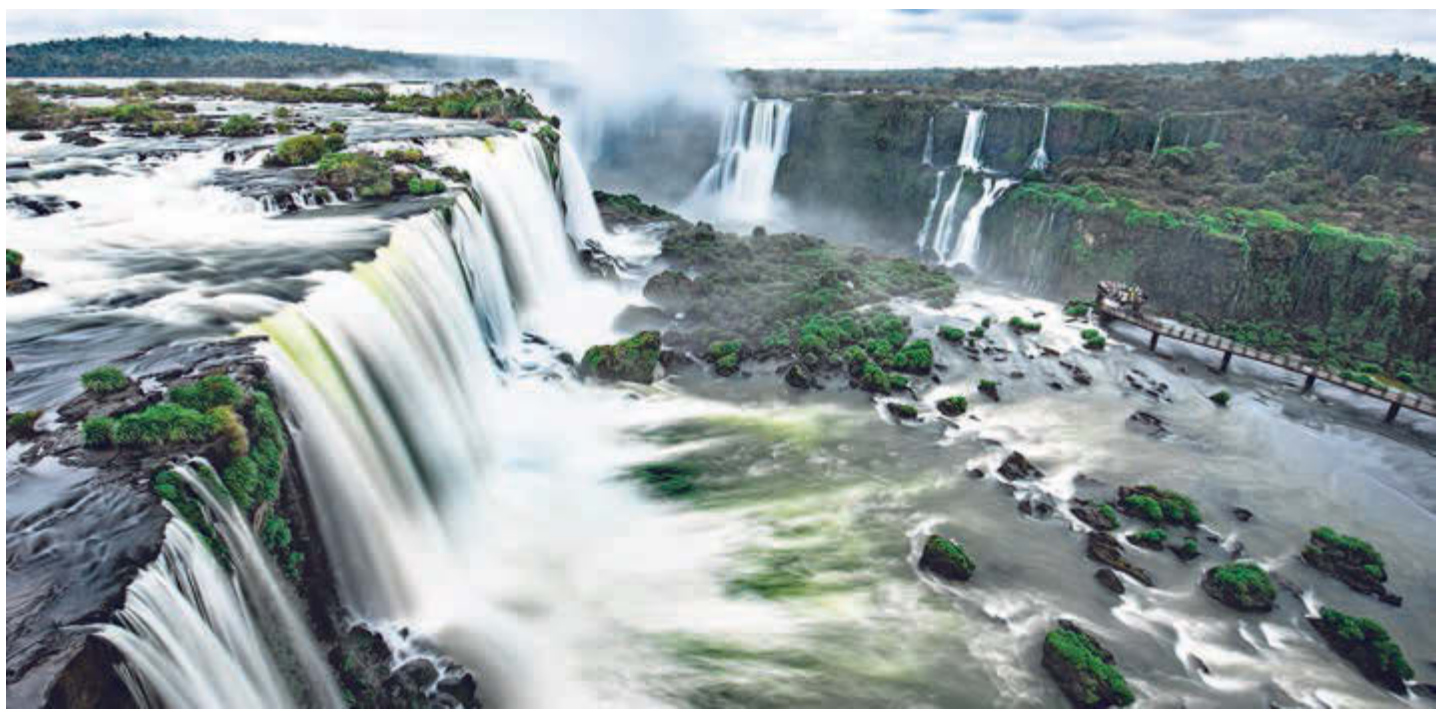
- A limited-edition exclusive metal print (\$10,000 each);
- A premium photo book box set (\$5,000 per set);
- A special photo book box set (\$1,000 per set); or
- A postcard pack (\$50 per pack).

All proceeds will go towards supporting 13 partnering charities.

LEFT: MONTEPULCIANO, TUSCANY, ITALY  
BELOW: CITY SKYLINE, SINGAPORE  
PHOTOS: COURTESY OF TAN CHUAN-JIN



LAKE TEKAPO, NEW ZEALAND



IGUAZU FALLS, BORDER OF ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL



### DIFFERENT VIEWS OF LIFE

Part of photography is how you look at the world. Sometimes we get poor weather. But you try and make that work for you. It's about looking for silver linings, and looking from different angles and perspectives... And truly, in everything, there is beauty, isn't it, if we look hard enough. Life is the way it is. But it's how you choose to view it and what you make of it.



**MR TAN CHUAN-JIN** Singapore's 10th Speaker of Parliament.



ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL AND THE MILLENNIUM BRIDGE, LONDON, ENGLAND



THE GAP, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



MEIGETSU-IN, KAMAKURA, JAPAN



MACHU PICCHU, PERU



# LET THERE BE LIGHT

The Bicentennial edition of the i Light festival, an annual sustainable light art event, takes on the theme Bridges Of Time. It explores Singapore's history and connectivity with the world through more than 30 light art installations and a multimedia show by Singapore and overseas artists.

## 1 The Time Vortex

You will feel like you are travelling through time as the Helix Bridge comes alive with lights whizzing through space.



## 2 Lighthouse Of Time

The facade of ArtScience Museum comes alive in an abstract dance of light and shadow.



## 3 The Rainbow Connection

Solar light modules – upcycled cookie containers combined with solar lights – sway in the wind at the Marina Bay Sands trellises to form a shifting prismatic projection on the ground.

## 4 Why Green?

An enclosed space in Event Square at Marina Bay filled with white three-dimensional printed flowers.

## 5 Facey Thing

As passers-by at the Marina Bay Waterfront Promenade get within range of a strategically placed camera, facial tracking will identify their faces and blow them up on a screen. They can then virtually "paint" their faces.



## 6 Prospective Perspective

Made from clothes pegs, this installation at the Marina Bay lower boardwalk faces the city skyline and predicts the outline of future buildings.

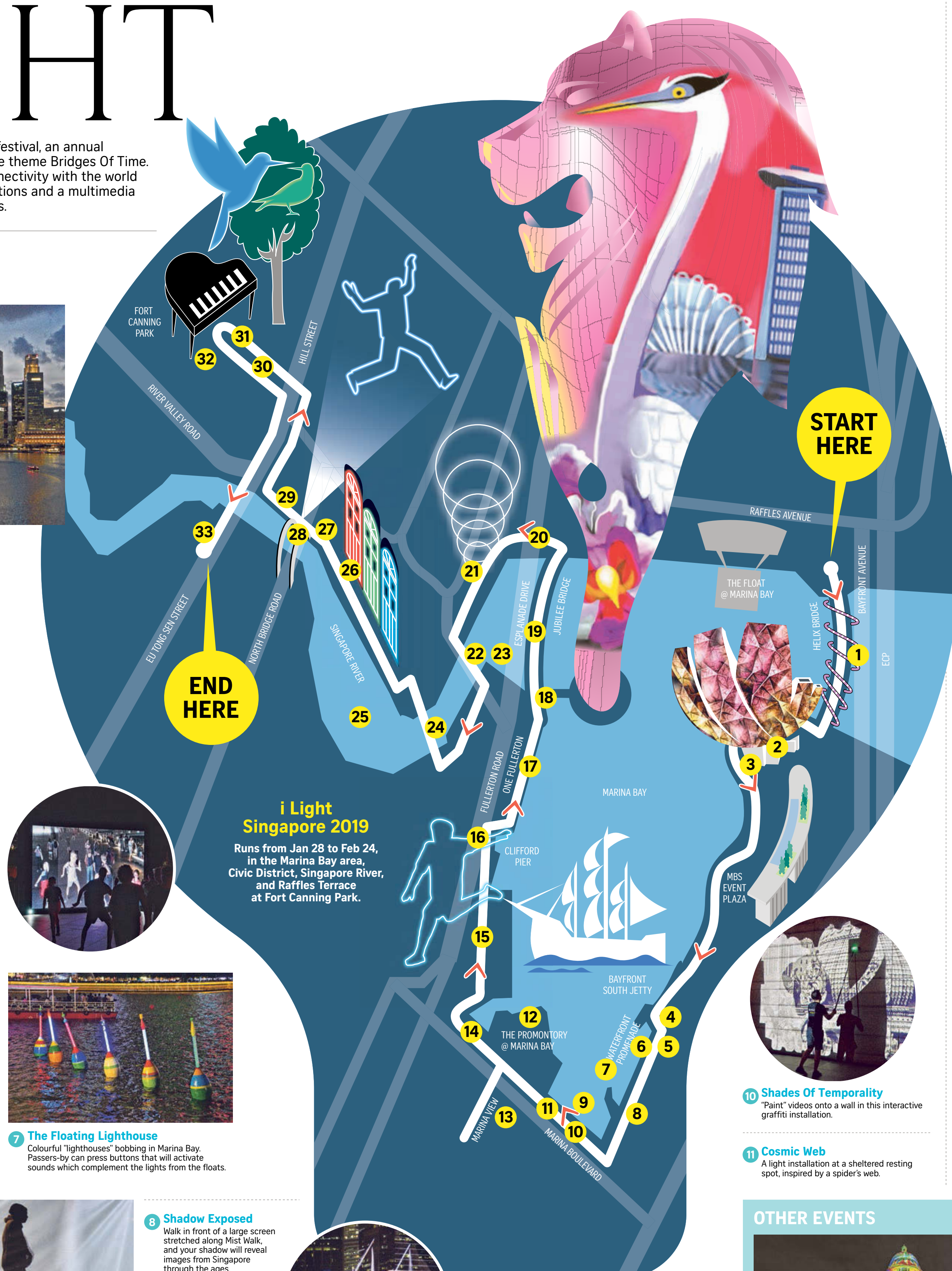


## 8 Shadow Exposed

Walk in front of a large screen stretched along Mist Walk, and your shadow will reveal images from Singapore through the ages.

## 9 Sails Aloft

A holographic boat at Marina Bay, inspired by the sampan panjang (long dwelling boat) and its racing boat variations.



## i Light Singapore 2019

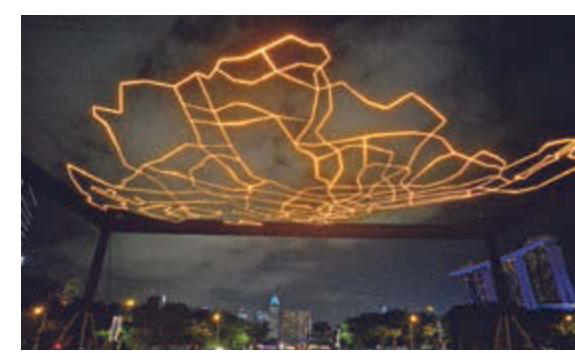
Runs from Jan 28 to Feb 24, in the Marina Bay area, Civic District, Singapore River, and Raffles Terrace at Fort Canning Park.

START  
HERE

END  
HERE

## 12 Squiggle

A twisting mass of digital neon tubing at The Promontory with shifting colours.



## 13 City Gazing Singapore

This installation at The Lawn @ Marina Bay shows the city of Singapore as it might look if you flew over it at night. Watch it grow from a couple of key roads into the international hub of today.

## 14 Les Footballeurs

An LED installation that captures the movement of football players.



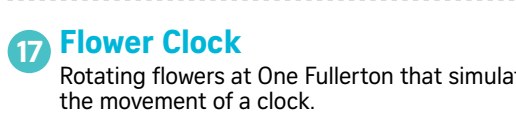
## 15 DUNE

Hundreds of fibres at OUE Bayfront brighten according to the movement of passers-by.



## 16 Time Traveller

Sculptures at Clifford Square which are inspired by bamboo fish traps.



## 17 Flower Clock

Rotating flowers at One Fullerton that simulate the movement of a clock.

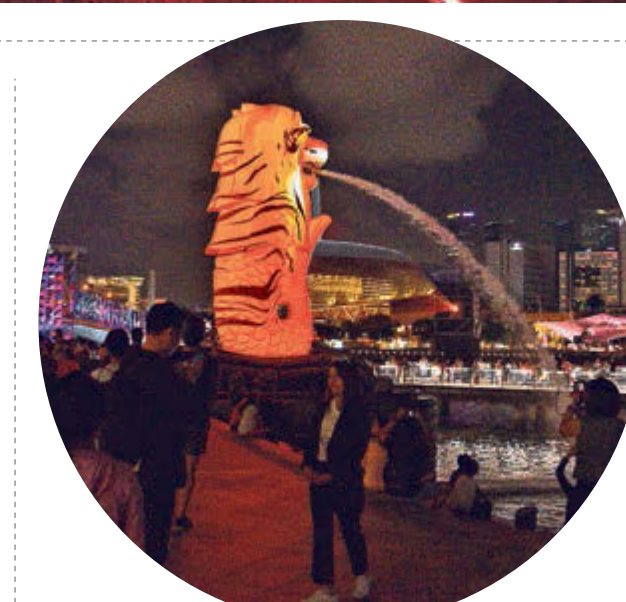


## 10 Shades Of Temporality

"Paint" videos onto a wall in this interactive graffiti installation.

## 11 Cosmic Web

A light installation at a sheltered resting spot, inspired by a spider's web.



## 18 The Cat In The Garden

Colourful lights on the Merlion with scenes from nature and snippets of daily life.

## 19 Oriflammes

Hundreds of vertical flags at Jubilee Bridge flap in the breeze while illuminated by kaleidoscopic lighting.

## 20 Time Frame

A carpet of real-time information projected on the ground under Esplanade Bridge shows the swift pace of our changing world.

## 21 Halo

Visitors can interact with these halo-like rings arranged in vertical columns at the Esplanade Park.

## 22 Time Rhythm

A gigantic "light metronome" at Anderson Bridge featuring light projections set to music.



## 23 Cenotaph For A Stone

This reinterpretation of the Singapore Stone – a slab of sandstone from a boulder that was blown up in 1843 to widen the mouth of the Singapore River – consists of "rock fragments" on steel pedestals at Waterboat House Garden.

## 24 Where Do Stories Begin/Where Do Stories End

The words "Where Do Stories Begin", in LED neon lights on one side of Cavenagh Bridge, can be seen against a view of Boat Quay while "Where Do Stories End" appear on the other side of the bridge with Marina Bay Sands as its backdrop.

## 25 Bridges Of Time

A multimedia show in front of the Asian Civilisations Museum which tells the story of a traveller who sails through time and space to reach a mythical island in the East.

PHOTOS: DESMOND WEE, i LIGHT SINGAPORE. SOURCE: i LIGHT SINGAPORE. STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS: CEL GULAPA, MARLONE RUBIO & TOH WEN LI



## 26 With A View

These shophouse windows create a series of reflections that recede into an infinite distance.

## 27 Good Fortune

A visualisation of rain at the Elgin Bridge underpass, inspired by the emotions it causes in different cultures.

## 28 Run Beyond

A human figure takes a bold leap across the Singapore River as a series of LED figures at Elgin Bridge comes aglow in succession.



## 29 Constructive Interference

An illuminated installation at North Boat Quay featuring a dynamic array of colours.

## 30 Land-pass Bird

Fluorescent blue "birds" perched on the trees of Raffles Terrace at Fort Canning Park.



## 31 Keys Of Light

Visitors playing the piano which is part of this interactive installation at Raffles Terrace in Fort Canning Park will conjure animated flowers projected onto a lighthouse.



## 32 Reflecting Holons

Long strips of transparent foil at Raffles House in Fort Canning Park spin and reflect light.



## 33 Crystallisation Of Thoughts

This installation at Clarke Quay Central imagines how ideas are generated and then combined into thoughts, in the form of interconnected waves of crystals.

## OTHER EVENTS



## Light to Night Festival

The Bicentennial leg of the Light to Night Festival 2019: Traces and Echoes reflects on Singapore's journey through artworks that reimagine its past. The festival in the Civic District runs till Feb 24. For more information, visit <https://www.nationalgallery.sg/festivals/light-to-night-traces-and-echoes>



## BALIKSG

BALIKSG is an augmented reality trail that will take visitors on routes along the Singapore River and around Fort Canning Hill, allowing them to revisit historical events and interact virtually with historical figures. To download the mobile application, visit <https://roots.sg/baliksg>



# Pre-school teachers get better pay, better training

Efforts to improve their pay, progression come as Govt looks to ramp up training

**Amelia Teng**  
Education Correspondent

The pay of pre-school teachers has improved over the years, even as the early childhood education sector ramps up training opportunities for them.

NTUC First Campus, the second largest pre-school operator here which hires more than 3,500 teachers, said the average pay for its

teachers who are diploma graduates has grown by more than 60 per cent over the last decade.

The starting pay for its teachers who have newly graduated from polytechnics is about \$2,400, higher than the median pay of \$2,350 for fresh polytechnic diploma holders last year.

The Ministry of Education (MOE), which has about 310 teachers across its 24 kindergartens, said a fresh diploma graduate who joins



Ms Phyllicia Chew says of her role as a pre-school teacher: "We're preparing the kids for the future, in terms of their gross motor skills, socio-emotional development, aesthetics, literacy and numeracy skills." ST PHOTO: DESMOND FOO

as an entry-level teacher in its kindergartens can expect a starting monthly pay of \$2,300.

Ms Amelia Tang, divisional director of HR strategy and leadership at MOE, said this has grown by about 15 per cent compared with 2014, when

the MOE kindergartens first started.

A spokesman for the PAP Community Foundation (PCF), the largest pre-school operator in Singapore, said it ensures that salaries and career progression for its teachers are "fair, competitive and commensu-

rate with their experience and professional skills". PCF did not disclose the starting pay of its teachers.

Mr Ng Yixian, executive director of EtonHouse, which has more than 850 pre-school teachers, said the pay for fresh diploma holders

ranges from \$2,500 to \$2,700 and could be higher depending on the individual's quality.

He said the pay has gone up over the years "to attract talented professionals to our schools".

Ms Fiona Walker, group managing director of Julia Gabriel Education which hires about 130 pre-school teachers, said the starting pay of fresh diploma graduates has increased by at least 20 per cent over the last four years. It is currently about \$2,200 to \$2,600.

These efforts to improve the pay and progression of teachers in the early childhood education field come as the Government looks to ramp up training for them.

One example is the setting up of the National Institute of Early Childhood Development, which takes in its first batch of students this year.

In Singapore, all new teachers must have at least an early childhood education diploma, but more degree holders have been joining the sector too.

Educators said there has also been better public awareness of what early childhood education practitioners do in recent years.

Ms Phyllicia Chew, who began as a pre-school teacher in 2009, said: "Previously, many parents thought early childhood education is about routine care like babysitting."


The 43-year-old, who made a career switch after doing sales in the advertising industry for about a decade, said: "It's not just academic skills, we're preparing the kids for the future, in terms of their gross motor skills, socio-emotional development, aesthetics, literacy and numeracy skills."

Ms Sasha Leung, who joined the MOE Kindergarten @ Sengkang Green last year, said: "People have misconceptions that all we do is play with the kids. But there's a lot of behind-the-scenes work that goes into achieving any outcome."

On why she chose to study early childhood education in polytechnic, the 24-year-old said: "I knew I wasn't a maths or science or business person. But I had good memories of my kindergarten days which were a lot of play and fun."

"I'm not in this profession for money, I'm doing this for the children."

ateng@sph.com.sg



# DO MORE AS ONE

At SIT, we celebrate the **DO culture** through collaboration. By working across clusters, with partners from various disciplines, we turn our differences into strengths. So that, together, we think, solve and create because everyone matters. We're **grounded in the community**, always working towards a common goal. For the greater good. #WEDOFROMDAYONE

DO APPLY.  
ADMISSIONS ARE NOW OPEN AT **SINGAPORETECH.EDU.SG**

**COME JOIN THE DO CULTURE**

## Help to go deeper into teaching craft

With more educated parents and children who need extra support, the role of a pre-school teacher today has become increasingly complex.

To meet these demands and more, pre-school operators have encouraged teachers and principals to keep learning through courses and mentoring.

Teachers at NTUC First Campus have three tracks of progression – leadership, language and curriculum.

A spokesman for the pre-school operator said teachers and supervisors work together on individual development plans, and it also has talent programmes to identify and speed up progression for teachers who show potential.

These include coaching, mentoring and grooming staff to become leaders.

Starting this year, NTUC First Campus has also offered book awards and sponsorships to selected teachers to pursue early childhood education degrees at the Singapore University of Social Sciences.

Similarly, teachers at the kindergartens run by the Ministry of Education who do well can take up senior positions on the teaching or centre leadership track.

Mr Ng Yixian, executive director of EtonHouse, said it has a leadership training programme for educators moving from associate or assistant teachers to roles such as senior teacher, curriculum coordinator and principal.

Teachers can also join its pedagogy team, take up management positions in the head office, or even explore overseas postings at EtonHouse's centres overseas.

Julia Gabriel Education, which runs Chiltern House pre-schools and Chengzhu Mandarin Centre, said it has invested heavily in leadership development and training staff to take on greater responsibilities, and allowing teachers to switch between centres and even enrichment programmes.

"We believe strongly in getting the right person for the job," said Ms Fiona Walker, its group managing director.

Amelia Teng



# IT'S A — THE NEW MARKET — DEAL

Produced by  
**sweetspot**  
Partner Content

View our photos at  
[www.instagram.com/besweets/](http://www.instagram.com/besweets/)

E-mail feedback to  
[sweetinfo@besweet.sg](mailto:sweetinfo@besweet.sg)



Celebrate Chinese New Year with healthier choices. PHOTOS: ISTOCK, F&N FOODS, PADDYKING

## Finding balance with healthier choices

These new options will give your festive feasting a healthier spin

BY RACHEL TAN

As Chinese New Year draws near, you can feast on the goodies while still keep your 2019 resolution of a balanced lifestyle with these healthier choices:

### Refreshing beverages

F&N's Healthier Choice Variety Pack comes in the auspicious hues of red and gold, symbolising good fortune and joy. The 18-can pack comes in an assortment of flavours — F&N's Orange Zero, Sarsi Zero and 100PLUS Zero — all of which are certified as Healthier Choice by the Health Promotion Board (HPB).

A new Healthier Choice flavour has also been introduced just in time for Chinese New Year, SEASONS Pu Erh Chrysanthemum.

The sugar-free fizzy drinks are a great companion to your guilt-free celebrations during the festive season, while the new sugar-free Pu Erh Chrysanthemum offers a non-fizzy alternative. It also has no added preservatives and artificial colouring.

The aromatic Pu Erh tea is complemented with the sweet floral Chrysanthemum tea, which gives the blend a light and honey floral hint — an ideal drink to cleanse your palate after a hearty meal.

Purchase these drinks at all leading supermarkets and hypermarkets.

### Delicious rice

PaddyKing's range of rice will add colour and variety to your reun-

ion dinner meals. Most importantly, they are all certified Healthier Choice by the HPB.

The Thai Brown Rice — ideal for all types of cuisine — is premium Thai Hom Mali Grade, with 80 per cent brown cargo rice and 20 per cent red cargo rice. The unpolished or unmilled rice is not only soft and tasty with a sweet nutty flavour, but also a rich source of vitamin B, dietary minerals and fibre.

Another good option is PaddyKing's Thai Riceberry, a hybrid rice variety bred from Thai Hom Mali Rice and Hom Nin Rice (Black Jasmine Rice). It is much like the Thai Brown Rice, but packed with more antioxidants and higher nutritional benefits due to its dark purple-black bran.

For making healthy porridge, PaddyKing's Thai 100% pure unpolished Red Cargo Rice offers a slightly harder texture than white rice, but retains the same nuttier taste as the Thai Brown Rice when cooked. It is also rich in vitamins and minerals.

Buy PaddyKing at Giant, Sheng Siong, Cold Storage, Prime Supermarkets and online marketplaces at RedMart, Qoo10 Singapore and Shopee.



### TOP PICKS

#### Garlic deals

Don't miss out on the BLACK GOLD Black Garlic Promo Pack at \$59.90, available at Cheers and FairPrice Xpress in Esso service stations, Unity and NHG Pharmacy for a limited time only. It consists of one box of Black Gold 6's, a pack of Black Gold Drink 200ml, and one copy of The Amazing Black Garlic Book. Save \$12.10 with this promo pack. For more information, call 6271-8122.



#### Redeem with rice

If you buy 10kg of SongHe Fragrant Rice, or any two 5kg packs of SongHe Fragrant Rice or SongHe New Crop, you can redeem an Auto Open Folding Umbrella. Redeem the umbrellas by March 31, while stocks last. The redemption coupons can be found in the rice bags. For more details, visit [tsp.songhe.com.sg](http://tsp.songhe.com.sg)



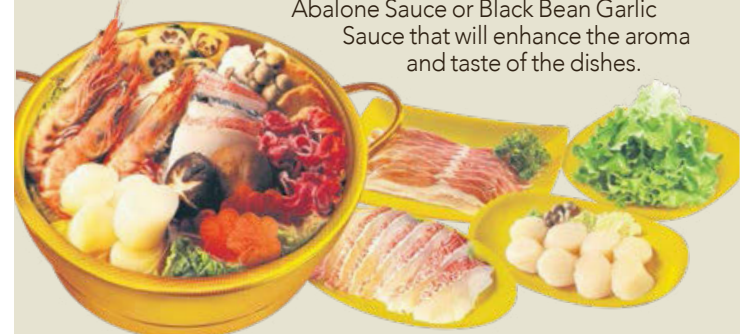
#### Golden treats

Mr Bean's mouthwatering Golden Prosperity Festive Menu includes Vegetarian Bak Kwa Golden Eggwich (\$3.50 per piece, \$16.80 for six pieces in a pancake box), Golden Soya Milk made with brown sugar, aiyu jelly and soya milk (\$2.50 per cup), and Golden Salted Egg Ice Cream (\$2.80 per cup). The limited-edition menu is available until Feb 19.



#### Steamboat selections

Cold Storage is the one-stop shop for all your Chinese New Year steamboat needs with its wide selection of meats, ranging from Wagyu Beef Shabu Shabu to Japanese Kurobuta Pork, as well as Frozen Hokkaido Scallops and Red Grouper Fish Slices. Don't miss out on the supermarket's assortment of sauces such as Abalone Sauce or Black Bean Garlic Sauce that will enhance the aroma and taste of the dishes.



#### Stylishly smart

HONOR, a smartphone brand owned by Huawei, has unveiled its latest range of smart devices: the HONOR View20, HONOR 10 Lite, HONOR Watch Magic and HONOR Band 4. The award-winning HONOR View 20 8/256GB at \$829 (SRP) is now available exclusively in Gain City Megastores @ Sungei Kadut, Marina Square, Ang Mo Kio, Tampines 1 and gaincity.com. Also get an HONOR Watch Magic at \$99 (worth \$199) with the purchase of HONOR View 20 8/256GB.



#### Festive flora

Adorn your home with festive blooms from Far East Flora's retail garden centres and at FarEastFloraGarden.com. Star buys for this year include Hydrangeas with its big flower heads of pink and blue; the long-lasting and elegant Phalaenopsis orchid series; and Pussy Willows. Don't miss out on popular favourites such as the limited-edition [Gold Series] Table Gardens with a golden pig decoration among prosperity plants such as Zamiculcas and Dracaena Fragrans.



#### Prosperous takeaways

Order Lunar New Year takeaways at [peachgardenshop.com](http://peachgardenshop.com) and Peach Garden restaurants from now until Feb 19. Enjoy a selection of yu sheng, pen cai, savoury delicacies and sweet treats with your family in the comfort of your home. These include the Prosperity Petite Abalone Yu Sheng, and Prosperity Treasure Package A comprising double-boiled Buddha jump over the wall and roasted London duck, among others. An advance order of three working days is required.



#### Campaign cats

Till Feb 10, 1.5m tall New Moon Prosperity Cats can be found at four FairPrice Finest outlets — Marine Parade, Bukit Timah, Thomson Plaza and Clementi Mall. Take a picture with the cat mascot and tag @NewMoonSG and #NewMoonProsperity on Facebook and Instagram. For each eligible post, New Moon will donate \$1 to Dyslexia Association of Singapore. \$1 will also be pledged when you purchase New Moon Abalone, Gift Sets and Prosperity Pot at the four participating outlets.

COMING UP



**Summer break in Brisbane**  
The Straits Times,  
Bon Voyage, Jan 29



**Imagining the future  
of design**  
<https://tinyurl.com/yauo85jy>



**5 ways the Open Electricity  
Market can work for you**  
<https://tinyurl.com/y78sj2yx>



**THE STRAITS TIMES**  
A Singapore Press Holdings publication  
News Centre  
1000 Toa Payoh North, Singapore 318994

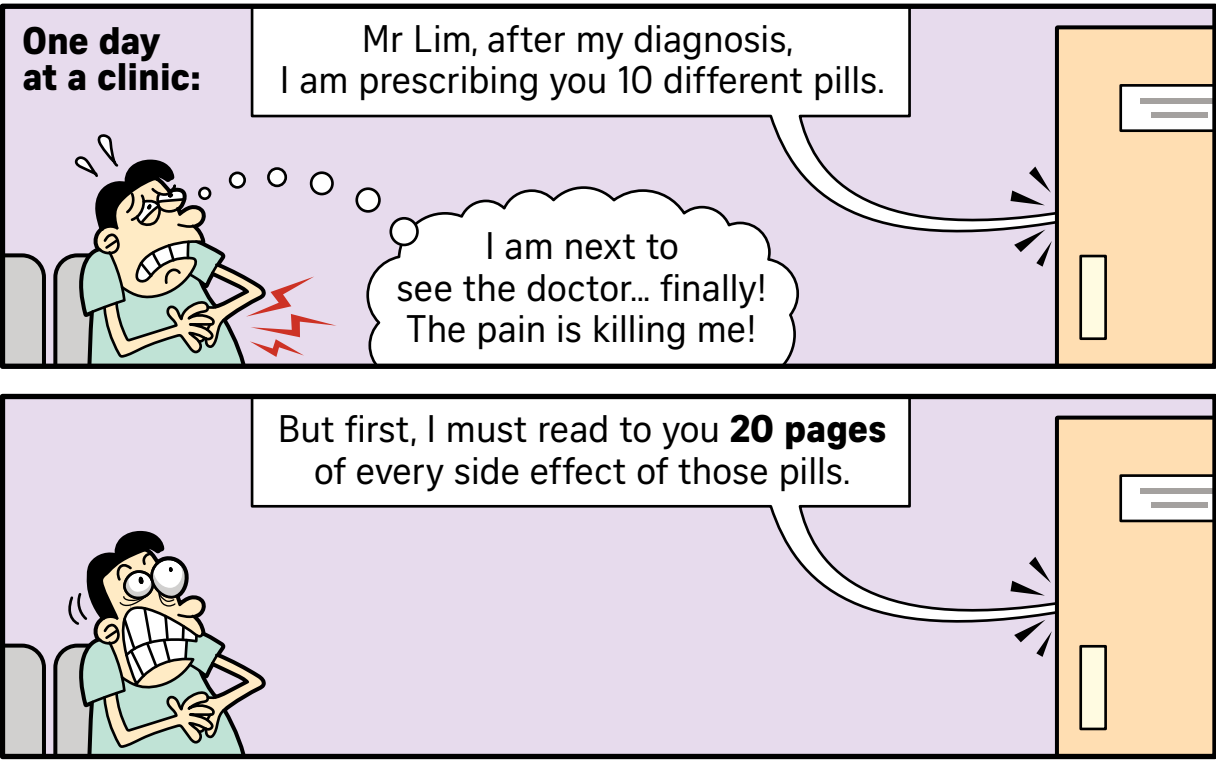
**CONTACT US**  
**General line:** 6319-6319  
**Home:** 6319-5397  
stnewsdesk@sph.com.sg  
**Business:** 6319-5360  
stbusiness@sph.com.sg

**Life:** 6319-5416  
stlife@sph.com.sg  
**Art:** 6319-5591  
start@sph.com.sg  
**Newsline:** 1800-828-2828  
**World:** 6319-5745  
stworld@sph.com.sg

**Sport:** 6319-5376  
stsports@sph.com.sg  
**Pictures:** 6319-5328  
stimage@sph.com.sg  
**ST Digital:** 6319-3232  
stdigital@sph.com.sg

# FORUM

## deedhan's TAKE



...after a doctor was fined \$100,000 for not telling a patient about all possible side effects of a treatment.

## Singapore's visual arts reputation needs salvaging

I refer to the sudden cancellation of the Art Stage fair just days before its planned opening (Please, don't give the arts a pass; Jan 20) and Mr Hua Tye Swee's letter (Govt agencies must manage art scene better; Jan 21).

Art Stage fair founder Lorenzo Rudolf puts the blame for the closure of the fair on "the very difficult market situation in Singapore" and the "unequal competition" from another fair, S.E.A. Focus.

It is an indisputable fact that the number of local and regional collectors here is still very small, despite the long-stated aim and best efforts of the National Arts Council, Singapore Tourism Board and Economic Development Board to invigorate the art market. Over the past two decades, they have given very generous support to the many art fairs here.

One of the most urgent issues facing the art scene here may be "declining attendances and ticket sales", but there is little doubt this issue of floundering art fairs and Singapore's declining art market credibility ranks right up there with it.

A major rethink of art fair support, especially financially, by these three government agencies is in order to salvage Singapore's visual arts reputation.

The new fair in November, Art SG, certainly has its work cut out for it. It cannot afford to fail.

**Lin Fangjie**

## Safety review should include culture change from ground up

Almost every Singaporean recognises the importance of a strong and credible defence force. The recent spat with Malaysia over maritime and aeronautical boundaries is a clear reminder of this.

Consequently, the nation's conscript army and reservist force are essential, for they ensure this continued strength of the country's defence amid uncertain times.

Having served as a ground commander of a combat unit during my national service, I am cognisant of how difficult it can be to find a balance between delivering rigorous training and ensuring the safety of servicemen. The prevention of tragic incidents such as the recent one during Exercise Thunder Warrior requires a willingness to embrace change from the ground up.

No amount of policy change and no number of safety pauses will effect any difference if training in the field is carried out as it always has been (SAF reduces training for safety review; Jan 25).

It is imperative commanders remember that they ultimately serve to protect and defend the nation, not to protect the historical traditions of a unit or to ensure adherence to regimentation and hierarchy.

Guaranteeing the safety of servicemen is of paramount importance, and this includes ensuring the proficiency of their men within their respective roles, strict adherence to training safety regulations and directives, and being open to feedback from those under their charge, regardless of their vocation or rank.

Similarly, in its review of the army's training practices during the safety timeout, Singapore Armed Forces leaders must obtain feedback not just from their commanders, but both full-time and operationally ready national servicemen on the ground.

This is especially important in the military, which is an organisation that is both steeped in tradition and has a rigid hierarchical structure.

To send a clear signal, command staff and policymakers should explicitly link the promotions and incentives of ground commanders to training safety, and not just physical fitness and operational and domain proficiency, as has traditionally been done.

We should never take for granted the NSFs and hundreds of thousands more men whose civilian lives take a hiatus for several weeks every year, as they don their uniforms and defend the nation in a myriad of capacities.

Every safety incident is a call for a change from the ground up, for every life lost or damaged is one too many.

**Collin Ho (Dr)**

## Learn lessons from Art Stage fair cancellation

The sudden cancellation of an art fair about a week before its opening is unprecedented and unheard of (Art Stage fair cancelled days before opening; Jan 17).

I know of artists and galleries left high and dry by the abrupt cancellation – artists who had created works for the event and galleries which had shipped works to be sold at the fair. Many are obviously angry and frustrated.

We need to know how such a debacle was allowed to happened, and learn what we can from it if we are to sustain our vision of becoming the region's art hub.

In a previous letter (Revitalise and reposition Art Stage Singapore; Dec 9, 2017), I pointed out the difficulties faced by Art Stage Singapore and the need to revitalise it.

So it's fair to say the writing was already on the wall, in terms of the unsustainability and possible exit of Art Stage Singapore.

Yet the reason given by fair director Lorenzo Rudolf, that the pull-out was a commercial decision, cannot explain why the fair was cancelled at the eleventh hour.

Since it opened in 2011, Art Stage Singapore has been Singapore Art Week's anchor event, giving the local art scene vibrancy and international visibility. Its exit leaves a void to be filled.

Can new players step into this void and put us back on the regional, if not global, art map? Are there too many art fairs for a market like Singapore with a small collector base? Are art fairs an important barometer of the development and maturation of our art scene, or should we look for other models?

The circumstances surrounding and leading up to the cancellation of Art Stage Singapore should give us pause regarding the future direction of Singapore's art scene, in the light of increased competition from other regional art centres.

**Jeffrey Say Seck Leong**

ONE FM 91.3

UNDERCOVER UNCLE

ANG BAO GIVEAWAY

Tune in to ONE FM 91.3 from  
**21 Jan to 1 Feb 2019** for clues to  
find our Undercover Uncle to win  
vouchers, Chinese New Year goodies,  
dining experiences and **\$888 CASH!**

onefm  
91.3

GOOD TIMES. GREATEST HITS

facebook.com/onefm913

instagram.com/onefm913

twitter.com/onefm913

@onefm913

sph radio

SPH RADIO

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

Part of sphradio



# Aim to be global hub for trade, commerce

Singapore should aim to become a global hub for trade and commerce, as well as other essential services, instead of aiming to be just a “global hub for bridging cultures”, (S’pore can be global hub for bridging cultures: Heng; Jan 13).

The world is at an inflection point, as it tries to make sense of the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment.

This is an opportune time for Singapore to make its move, as many developed countries are adopting austerity measures and taking a cautious approach in achieving progress.

Through globalisation, talent development, digitisation and innovation, Singapore can reposition itself as a vital hub, a router and connector for the

world at large.

Singapore can become a switching centre for ideas, innovation, knowledge, collaborations, technology and other resources.

So that in the future, whenever something is sold from one country to another, even if the goods do not physically pass through Singapore, it can still have

a stake in the transaction.

In the past, Singapore leveraged its geographical position to serve as an important entrepot for the region.

By becoming a headquarter of the globalised community, Singapore can go beyond its physical and other constraints to create a better future for its people.

**Patrick Liew Siow Gian (Dr)**

## Healthcare Internet access balances operational use, security

We thank Mr Tan Kar Quan for his views (Why wasn’t cyber security strategy to cut Internet rolled out?; Jan 19).

The public healthcare sector has been studying the application of Internet surfing separation (ISS) to enhance cyber security. However, as Internet access was important to a range of functions in healthcare institutions, significant challenges would have had to be addressed before this could be implemented.

We were also studying and testing alternative solutions such as a “virtual browser” solution, which allows access to the Internet through strictly controlled client

servers. While not totally risk-free, it reduces the dangers significantly while minimising impact on operations.

Following the SingHealth cyber attack in July last year, the Health Ministry decided to implement temporary ISS in the public healthcare sector as a precaution.

This posed challenges in areas including emergency care, access to patient education resources, and booking of clinical appointments.

As a result, we had to put in place temporary workarounds.

These workaround solutions may not be appropriate for the long term. The recently completed

Committee of Inquiry stated that the optimal Internet access strategy for the healthcare sector would require a balance of various considerations such as cyber security risks and patient safety, and recommended that an Internet access strategy which minimises exposure to external threats be implemented.

We will be piloting the “virtual browser” in an operational environment, to assess its effectiveness. We are working with the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore on this and the evaluation is expected to take about six months.

This will enable us to make a more considered decision on our Internet access model in public healthcare.

We hope to develop a balanced solution that can be more efficient and sustainable for healthcare, and allow us to implement future models of care, such as telemedicine, that leverage the Internet to provide better patient care and services in the community.

We thank patients and healthcare colleagues for their understanding and cooperation.

We will continue to strengthen our systems and capabilities for greater cyber security resilience.

**Lim Siok Peng (Ms)**  
Director, Corporate Communications  
Ministry of Health

# S’pore’s unique football ecosystem crying out for reform

It could be argued that the Football Association of Singapore (FAS) would not discard its FAS Football Academy (FFA) if it had produced the desired results since its inauguration in 2000 (Football: FAS to shut down its elite academy; Jan 13).

Placing the responsibility of identifying, recruiting and developing young talent back in the hands of Singapore Premier League (SPL) clubs is an admission that the centralised system has not produced a formidable national team.

The balance, flexibility and mastery of basic ball control in our young players have to be nurtured from the primary school level. If SPL clubs know that these children are permitted to come through the ranks right to their youth and senior squads, more resources will be invested in them.

No club would commit to any long-term programme if the cream of their talent is co-opted into the Singapore Sports School or Young Lions squad when they come of age.

The FAS must support youth

development schemes in which training is fun yet effective.

The development of skills such as trapping, controlling and receiving a ball, and the importance of awareness of one’s surroundings, is fundamental.

The FAS must take charge of this ecosystem, which is the most basic of its responsibilities, and fill the current vacuum in the game’s leadership. The previous turf war between the FAS and SPL clubs in competing for emerging talent must be transformed to one of collaboration.

The current rules in the SPL requiring clubs to register a minimum of six players below 23 years of age, and the scrapping of the Prime League are detrimental to the development of young players. Without a reserve team league, teenage players may be prematurely integrated into first-team football, which could stunt their growth and even ruin their careers.

Singapore’s unique football ecosystem is crying out for reform from top to bottom.

**Edmund Khoo Kim Hock**

## VoicesOfYouth

### Making Raffles vanish not a good idea

The disappearing act of the Sir Stamford Raffles statue may have evoked amusement and appreciation from some people, but it may not have been executed in very good taste (Raffles does a ‘disappearing’ act in North Boat Quay; Jan 3).

While visually stunning, the act could allude to making Raffles “disappear” from the Singapore facade and identity.

Raffles recognised the potential of Singapore 200 years ago, and sought to modernise a large part of the island.

Then and now, his statue and image should not have to be overlooked, just as his impact should never be undermined.

**Josephine Pau Joe Yee**, 15  
Secondary 3 student

### Heavier fines for flouting smoking ban

While many places clearly have signs to indicate that smoking is prohibited by law, many people still do not abide by it. The core of the problem is a mentality that they can get away with it.

Singapore is on the right track with the raising of the legal

smoking age and smoking ban in Orchard Road. However, I think that more severe penalties such as heavier fines are needed to ensure that these changes are effective.

**Yang Yizhen**, 16  
Junior college year 1 student

**CALLING YOUNG READERS:** If you are a student or aged 21 years or below, and want to air your opinion on any report or letter in The Straits Times, e-mail your letter to [stforum@sph.com.sg](mailto:stforum@sph.com.sg), with the subject header “Voices of Youth”. Do include your age, school level and contact details, and the headline of the report/letter you refer to. Please keep to a length of 250 words.

## FORUM ONLINE

**CHIOU LID JIAN:** Temasek a better white knight for Hyflux?

**ST MORE LETTERS ON**  
[www.straitstimes.com](http://www.straitstimes.com)  
Join readers in sharing heartwarming stories at [www.facebook.com/groups/whatsgd/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/whatsgd/)

We refer to the letters by Mr Yeo Hock Yew (Clarity on local football ‘ecosystem’ needed, Dec 12, 2018; and Why are FAS, Fandi keeping mum on ‘unique ecosystem’ comment?, Jan 14) and also that by Mr George Pasqual (Fandi really should explain his cryptic comment; Dec 15, 2018).

Both writers requested clarity on what was meant by a ‘unique ecosystem’ in local football (FAS not seeking a big name; Dec 7, 2018).

Much like several other football-playing countries with a small population size and land constraints, the Football Association of Singapore (FAS) has had to work around these factors as we develop the sport in Singapore.

Our local young footballers, similar to other local athletes, have to juggle their commitments to national service and priorities on academia – an age group where

globally and regionally, football players are full-time professionals.


While we enjoy broad participation at the grassroots level, the apex of the development pyramid is narrower, as in all elite sports.

Having led the Lions for the 2018 Asean Football Federation Suzuki Cup campaign, Fandi Ahmad is conscious of how important it is for national teams to have the support from all stakeholders as the team prepares for a campaign.

In this regard, the FAS enjoys a close partnership with our partners and stakeholders, and we will continue to work closely with them to ensure that our local footballers are able to perform in the best possible environment for their development.

**Yazeen Buhari**  
General Secretary  
Football Association of Singapore

Eligible for SkillsFuture credits



## THE STRAITS TIMES ENGLISH MASTERCLASS

The Executive Edition

**You can now use SkillsFuture credits to pay for the course. Companies that want their employees to write better should also sign up for this one-day course that teaches them to:**

- Write simply and effectively to customers
- Avoid embarrassing errors in print or online
- Compose clear e-mail messages to get things done
- Use words to better market products
- Organise facts to convey corporate and impactful messages

**“This is a powerful course.”**

**Annie Chan**  
Customer engagement manager

I attended the ST Masterclass as I knew the ST professionals would have lots of tips for me to further sharpen my writing. No matter how good your writing is, you can always get new ideas from other professionals. I was right. I learnt new techniques to communicate even more effectively.

**Agnes Sng**  
Writer and former lawyer

I benefited both professionally and personally from the course. It made me more aware of how I use the language and how to avoid common grammatical errors. The engaging trainers also inspired me to learn more about writing.

**Angeline See**  
Human resource executive

**Dates:** Feb 19 or 25  
Mar 5 or 12  
(1-day course)

**Time:** 10am to 6pm  
(including lunch and tea breaks)

**Venue:** Level 8 Tower Block  
SPH News Centre  
1000 Toa Payoh North

**Fee:** \$499 a person

**6319-5076**

[STmasterclass@sph.com.sg](mailto:STmasterclass@sph.com.sg)

Sign up now at [stskills.sg](http://stskills.sg)

**ST** news with benefits


## THE STRAITS TIMES

WE’VE GOT SINGAPORE COVERED

Subscribe now at [stsub.sg](http://stsub.sg)  
or call 6388-3838

# THE STRAITS TIMES

## ALL-DIGITAL PACKAGE




# \$0.99\*

## per month

### FOR THE FIRST 6 MONTHS

VISIT [STSUB.SG/OFFER](http://STSUB.SG/OFFER) OR SCAN THIS QR CODE TO SUBSCRIBE

\*Promotion is applicable with a 12-month contract. The promotional price is \$0.99 per month for the first six months, prevailing rate of \$29.90/month applies thereafter. This promotion is valid only for new and vendor subscribers. Other terms and conditions apply. Please visit [stsub.sg/offer](http://stsub.sg/offer) for more information.





# PICTURE THIS



ST PHOTO: JUNID JUANI

## Time for a bull run

At Singapore's first Chingay parade on Feb 4, 1973, the procession from Jalan Besar to Outram Park was led by a float bearing a statue of a bull and two giant firecrackers to celebrate the Year of the Ox.

Photonico is a website offering high-quality stock photos that celebrate Asian contemporary culture and heritage.

It is a platform that showcases the thousands of editorial and stock photos that our staff and contributing photographers shoot. These photos can be purchased for personal and commercial use at an affordable price.

[www.photonico.asia](http://www.photonico.asia)

To contribute photos, get in touch with us at [team@photonico.asia](mailto:team@photonico.asia)



SEARCH  
BUY  
USE

1 SEARCH from a vast selection of curated Asian culture and heritage photos.

2 BUY photos of old and modern Singapore, travel, nature, food, daily life and more.

3 USE the photos on different platforms with our various licensing options.

SHOOT  
SHARE  
EARN

1 SHOOT your own photos of Singapore and Asian street scenes, nature, daily life and travel.

2 SHARE them with us and be part of our community of photographers at Photonico.asia

3 EARN when your photos are sold with our 50 per cent revenue share programme.

[www.zaobao.sg](http://www.zaobao.sg)



\*Contains Chinese content



Scan to explore